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MARVEL
PREVIEW

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MARVEL PREVIEW

PRESENTS

MAN-GOD™

**the FIRST and
GREATEST
superhero of all time!**

from the
blockbusting novel
"Gladiator", by
**PHILIP
WYLIE**





STAN LEE presents MAN-GOD



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From birth, he was like no other before him. And, as a man, he stood upon the threshold of destiny. Would he use his superhuman powers for good—or to become the greatest menace the world had ever known? First time in comics form — an awesome adaptation of *Philip Wylie's* epic novel *Gladiator*, as conceived by *Roy Thomas, Rich Buckler, and Tony deZuniga*.

PHILIP WYLIE 56

A brief biography of one of the greatest essayists and fantasy writers of our century.

SUPERMEN IN SCIENCE FICTION 60

An illuminating look at the men who walk like gods — in the pages of SF, then and now — by *Don & Maggie Thompson*.

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This issue is
respectfully
dedicated to the
memory of
PHILIP WYLIE,
who created a
legend for our time

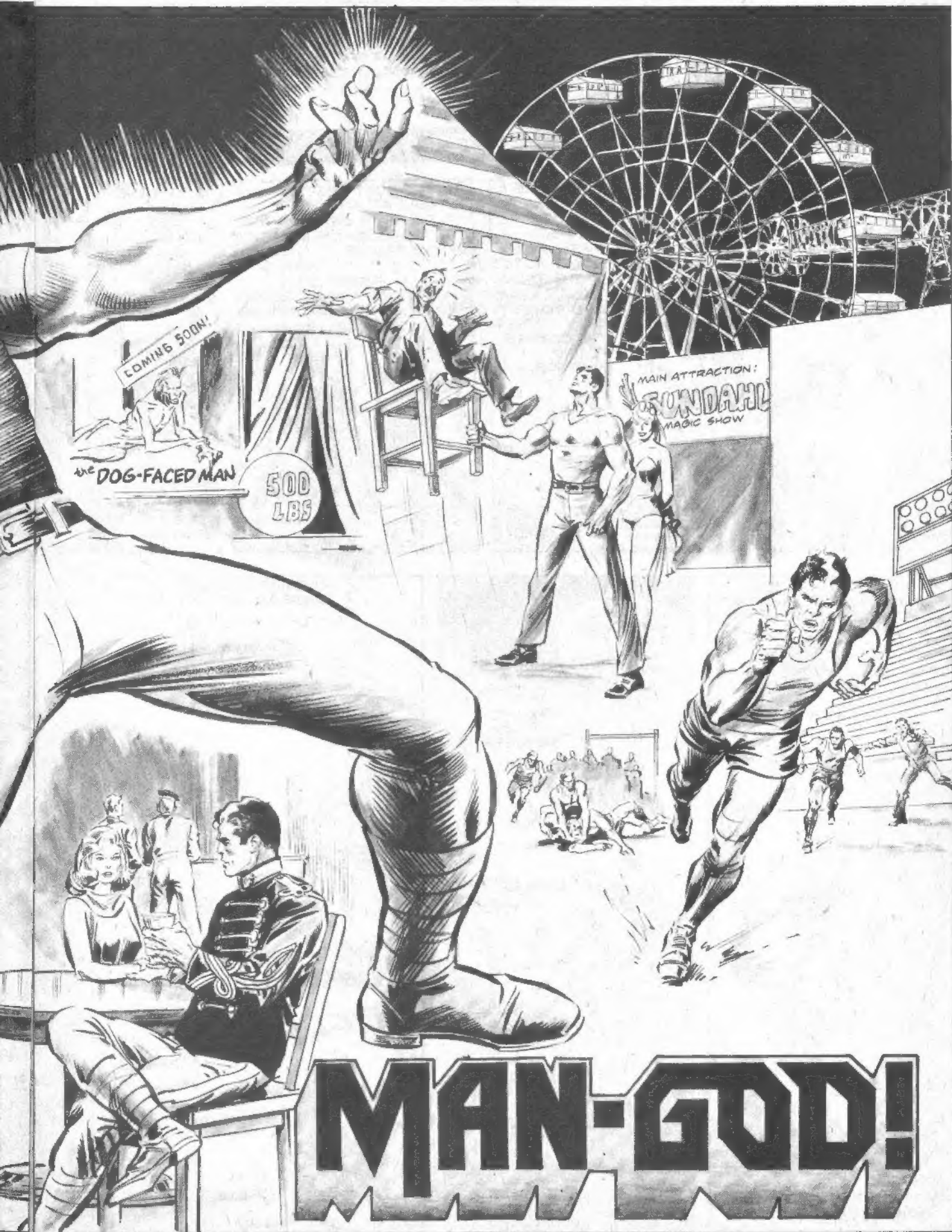


THE PRODUCT OF AN AMAZING BIOLOGICAL EXPERIMENT, **HUGO DANNER** WAS BORN AND GREW UP FREE FROM THE **FEARS** THAT INHIBIT OTHER MEN.

HE WAS LIKE THE **TITANS** OF OLD, OR THOSE STRANGE AND FANTASTIC CREATURES OF **MYTH** WHO WERE THE OFFSPRING OF BOTH **MORTAL WOMAN** AND DIVINE **DEITY**.

HE WAS --

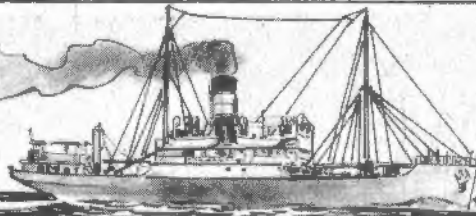




MAN-GOD!

THE YEAR IS
1914; BUT
THE SEA IS
ETERNAL!

BLUE, GREEN, RESTLESS, GHOST-RIDDEN...
DRIVEN IN EMPTY QUARTERS BY DEVILS
RIDING THE WIND... BEAUTIFUL, HORRIBLE...
DEAD GOD OF TEN THOUSAND VOICES...
UNIVERSAL INCUBATOR, UNIVERSAL GRAVE.



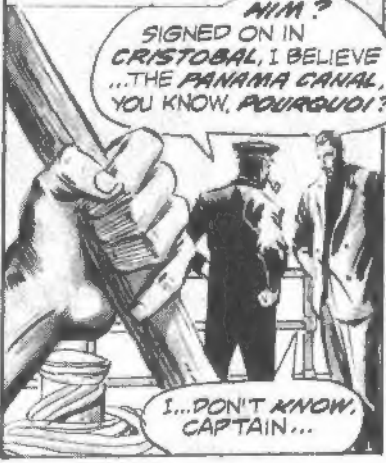
THE FRENCH
SHIP *KATRINA*
IS APPROACH-
ING THE
HARBOR AT
MARSEILLES
WHEN IT
HAPPENS...



THE YOUNG
SEAMAN,
SWABBING
THE DECK,
TAKES ONLY
SCANT NOTICE
OF THE DORSAL
FIN OF A SHARK
AS IT MOMENT-
ARILY RIPPLES
THE OCEAN'S
PLACID
SURFACE...



AND, HE MUST PRETEND NOT
TO HEAR AT ALL THE WORDS
OF THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN AND
THE RICH-LOOKING AMERICAN
BY THE RAILING...



SOMETHING
ABOUT HIM...
MAKES HIM
STAND OUT.



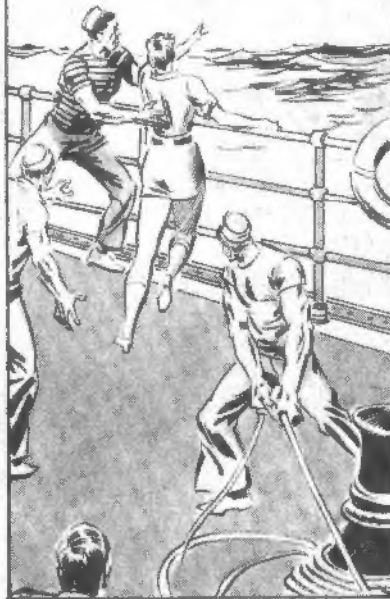
I THINK I KNOW WHAT YOU
MEAN, M'SIEU. QUIET SUGGEST-
ION OF *POWER*, THAT SORT
OF THING, *NON*?

HE KEEPS
MOSTLY TO
HIMSELF.
I'VE HEARD...
AND THE
CREW SEEMS
TO LIKE IT
THAT WAY.



WHAT HAS
HAPPENED,
MADAME?
WHY DID YOU
CRY OUT--?

M-MY
SON-- MY
LITTLE
JACQUES--



--HE HAS FALLEN
OVERBOARD--!

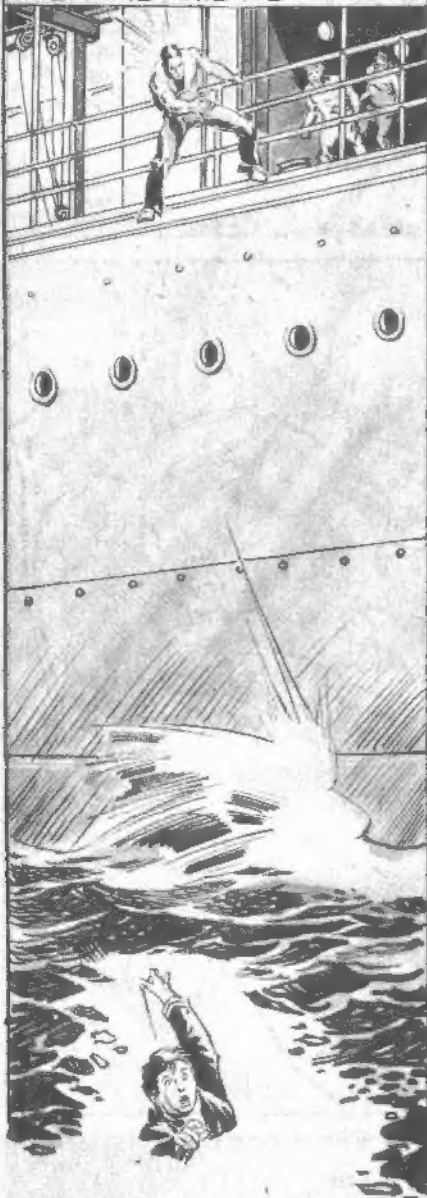
SACRE
BLEU!



MAMAN!
MAMAN!

HELP! IN THE NAME OF
GOD-- HELP!!

EVEN AS THE OTHER STARTLED VOYAGERS FIRST **SEE** THE DEADLY, MENACING **SHARK'S FIN** CLEAVING THE WATER, THE MYSTERIOUS YOUNG SEAMAN IS **OVER THE RAILING--**



--AND **INTO** THE HORROR-FILLED WATERS!



THE WATCHERS ABOVE CANNOT SEE THAT POWERFUL HUMAN FIGURE **BENEATH** THE WAVES-- DIVING INTO THE GREEN DEPTHS AS A GREAT **WHITE-FRINED MOUTH** YAWNS MADLY AT HIM...



NOR WOULD THEY **BELIEVE** THEIR EYES IF THEY BEHELD HIM TURN AND **STREAK TOWARD** THE SHARK, LIKE A **ROCKET MADE OF FLESH AND BLOOD...**



...ONLY TO **DODGE** AT THE LAST MOMENT THOSE WIDE-SPREAD JAWS, AND GRASP ONTO AN **OUTTHRUST FIN!**





ENRAGED NOW BY THIS HUMAN MINNOW WHICH HAS DARED ATTACK IT, THE SHARK VEERS OFF TOWARD GREATER DEPTHS, WHICH WOULD CRUSH THE LIFE OUT OF ANY MAN.

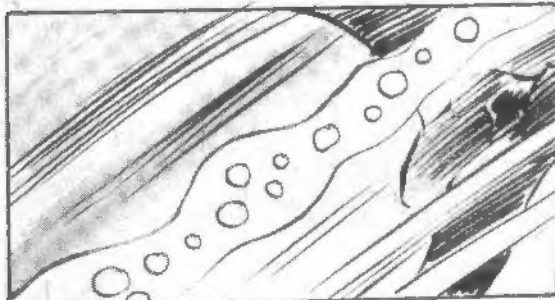
ANY MAN... BUT THIS ONE.



AND, ALL MORTAL EYES ABOVE ARE ON THE BOBBING FIGURE OF THE FRENCH BOY...



...AS, FAR BELOW, THE SEAMAN SNATCHES THE SHARK'S LOWER JAW IN ONE HAND, THE UPPER IN THE OTHER !



HE EXERTS HIS STRENGTH--



--AND THE MOUTH GAPES WIDER STILL, AS THE THING DIES WITH FINGERS LIKE STEEL CLAWS TEARING AT ITS BRAIN !

THE SHARK FLOATS *BELLY UP*, ITS BLOOD STAINING THE *SURFACE*--
AND WITHIN SECONDS, *OTHERS* HAVE APPEARED FROM OUT OF
NOWHERE TO *SAVAGE IT*--



--AS THE NOW-
FORGOTTEN
HUMAN
HURTLES
SWIFTLY
UPWARD.

IF THOSE ON
BOARD WERE
TRULY
OBSERVANT,
THEY MIGHT
NOTE THAT
THE YOUNG
SEAMAN SEEMS
ALMOST TO BE
HOLDING
BACK AS HE
SWIMS, QUICKLY
ENOUGH, BACK
TOWARD THE
SHIP WITH HIS
SHIVERING
ARMFUL.



THERE, A
HASTILY-
THROWN
LADDER
IS WAITING...

...AND, ABOVE, AN ANXIOUS MOTHER:



JACQUES-- OH,
MY LITTLE
JACQUES--!

MAMAN--

H-HE
SAVED MY
LIFE,
MAMAN!

THAT'S FOUR.



SO SOFTLY
DOES THE
SEAMAN
SPEAK THAT
HIS WORDS GO
UNHEARD,
DROWNED OUT
BY SOUNDS OF
TEARFUL
HAPPINESS.

WE SAW THE
SHARK'S BLOOD.
MON AMI! HOW
DID YOU DO IT?

IT'S...A SORT OF
TRICK I LEARNED
YEARS AGO.

YOU USE THE
SHARK'S OWN
RUSH TO BREAK
ITS JAWS! IT TAKES
A GOOD DEAL
OF MUSCLE.



HOW MUCH MORE
WIDELY THEIR
MOUTHS WOULD
GAPE, IF THEY
KNEW HE HAD
NEVER SEEN A
SHARK BEFORE
IN HIS LIFE.



WHEN THE KATRINA DOCKS, THE STRANGE SEAMAN DEPARTS... AND SOMEHOW, BOTH CAPTAIN AND CREW KNOW THEY'LL NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN.

IF HE NOTICES THE MUSTACHIOED YOUNG AMERICAN FOLLOWING HIM, HE GIVES NO OUTWARD SIGN...



...AND SOON, HE IS SEATED IN A RESTAURANT ON THE BOULEVARD...

DE LA BIÈRE GARGON.

OUI, M'SIEU.

EXCUSE ME, SIR... I CAN TELL FROM YOUR ACCENT THAT YOU TOO ARE AN AMERICAN...



SO, MAY A FELLOW COUNTRYMAN JOIN YOU?

I... HAD REALLY PLANNED TO EAT ALONE...



PERHAPS I SHOULD INTRODUCE MYSELF. I'M THOMAS MATHEW SHAYNE; I'M FROM NEW YORK.

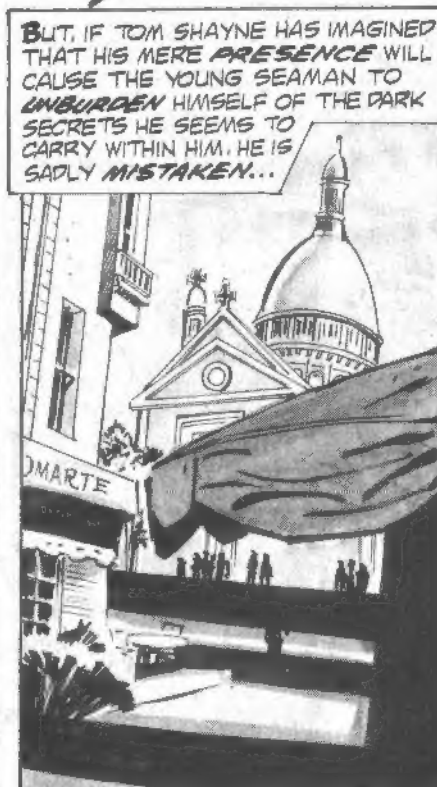
SO AM I, IN A WAY.

I WAS ON THE KATRINA...

I KNOW.

WELL, ALL RIGHT. YOU MAY AS WELL SIT DOWN.

THANK YOU.



BUT, IF TOM SHAYNE HAS IMAGINED THAT HIS MERE PRESENCE WILL CAUSE THE YOUNG SEAMAN TO UNBURDEN HIMSELF OF THE DARK SECRETS HE SEEMS TO CARRY WITHIN HIM, HE IS SADLY MISTAKEN...

--AS THE BEER-DRINKING PROCEEDS IN AWKWARD SILENCE, HERE IN THIS FRENCH PORT IN THE SUMMER OF 1914.

THEN, AFTER A LONG PAUSE, THE SILENCE IS SHATTERED BY THE NEWS WHICH WILL FOREVER ALTER THE COURSE OF HISTORY... NOT TO MENT ON THE LIFE OF HUGO DANNER...



AND SO THEY WENT, THESE TWO FOREIGNERS, TO JOIN THOUSANDS OF FRENCHMEN, IN THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM AGAINST THE HORDES OF THE KAISER--

THERE IT IS, MY NEWFOUND COMRADE-- THE ENLISTMENT OFFICE! SHALL WE SIGN UP BEFORE WE REGAIN OUR SANITY?

JOIN LES LEGIONNAIRES

I THINK WE'D BETTER! WE MAY NOT GET ANOTHER CHANCE TO GET OUR HEADS BLOWN OFF!

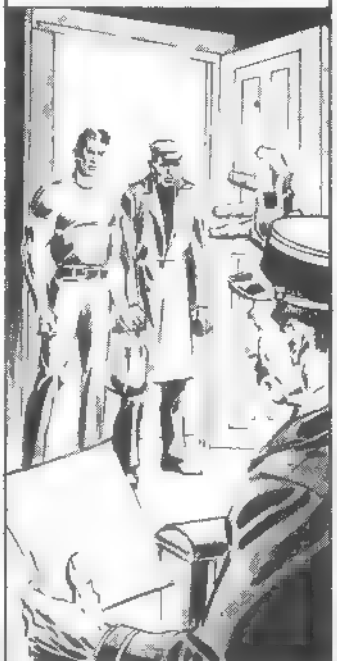
BUT, HIS OWN SAFETY IS THE LAST THING ON DANNER'S MIND AS HE WALKS TOWARD THE FOREIGN LEGION HEADQUARTERS, FOR HE KNOWS HE NEED FEAR NEITHER MAN NOR BULLETS.

NO, HUGO DANNER FEARS ONLY HIMSELF-- ONLY THE DAY WHEN HE MAY ONCE AGAIN LOSE HIS TEMPER AND INNOCENTLY WREAK HAVOC UPON INNOCENT VICTIMS!



HE MUST NOT LET THAT HAPPEN, HE THINKS, WHILE AT THAT VERY MOMENT EVIL MINDS PLOT AGAINST HIM, TOTALLY IGNORANT OF THEIR INTENDED VICTIM'S BRUTE STRENGTH!

SO IT NEVER OCCURS TO HIM THAT HE WILL HAVE TO FIGHT BEFORE THE WAR AS HE STEPS FORWARD TO ENLIST--



--TO JOIN A CAUSE WHICH CAN MAKE GOOD USE OF THE POWERS WHICH ARE HIS ALONE AMONG ALL MEN ON EARTH.

ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS, FRIEND? STILL NOT TOO LATE TO BACK OUT!

WHAT A STRANGE THING TO SAY-- BUT I'LL NOT QUESTION YOU, AT LEAST NOT UNTIL I KNOW YOU BETTER.

IT IS FOR ME! PERHAPS IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN LATE, PERHAPS WAR IS MY DESTINY!

REPORT IN THE MORNING-- AT 8 O'CLOCK! YOU ARE LEGIONNAIRES NOW!

TOM SHAYNE-- SOLDIER! THAT'S HARD FOR ME TO BELIEVE, MY FRIEND-- YET, IT IS TRUE!

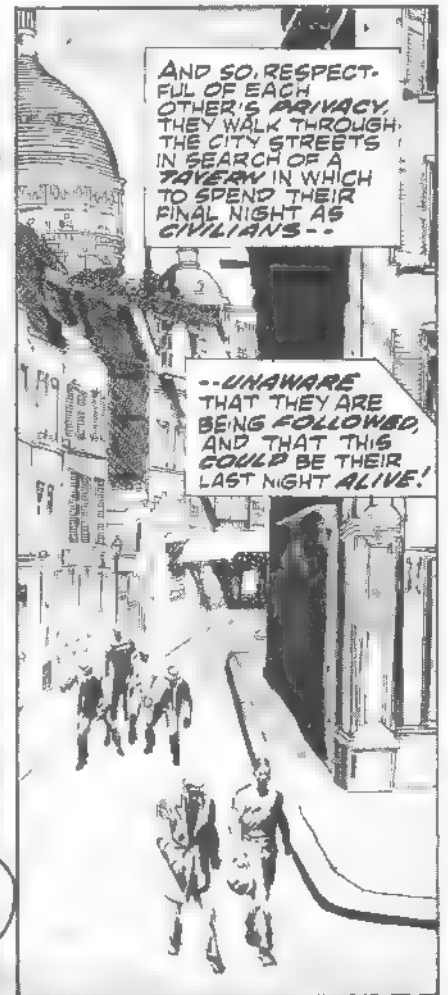
F ONLY MY PARENTS COULD HAVE SEEN ME TAKE THE OATH--



I APPRECIATE YOUR NOT PRYING INTO MY PRIVATE THOUGHTS, SO, I'LL SHOW YOU THE SAME COURTESY.

AND SO, RESPECTFUL OF EACH OTHER'S PRIVACY, THEY WALK THROUGH THE CITY STREETS IN SEARCH OF A TAVERN IN WHICH TO SPEND THEIR FINAL NIGHT AS CIVILIANS--

--UNAWARE THAT THEY ARE BEING FOLLOWED, AND THAT THIS COULD BE THEIR LAST NIGHT ALIVE!



FROM THE BLACKEST SHADOWS, THE THIEVES
ATTACK FROM BEHIND AND WITHOUT WARNING--

GET THEM! THEY
MUST BE CARRYING
BONUS MONEY FROM
THE LEGION!



RUN FOR SAFETY,
FRIEND! THIS I CAN
HANDLE!



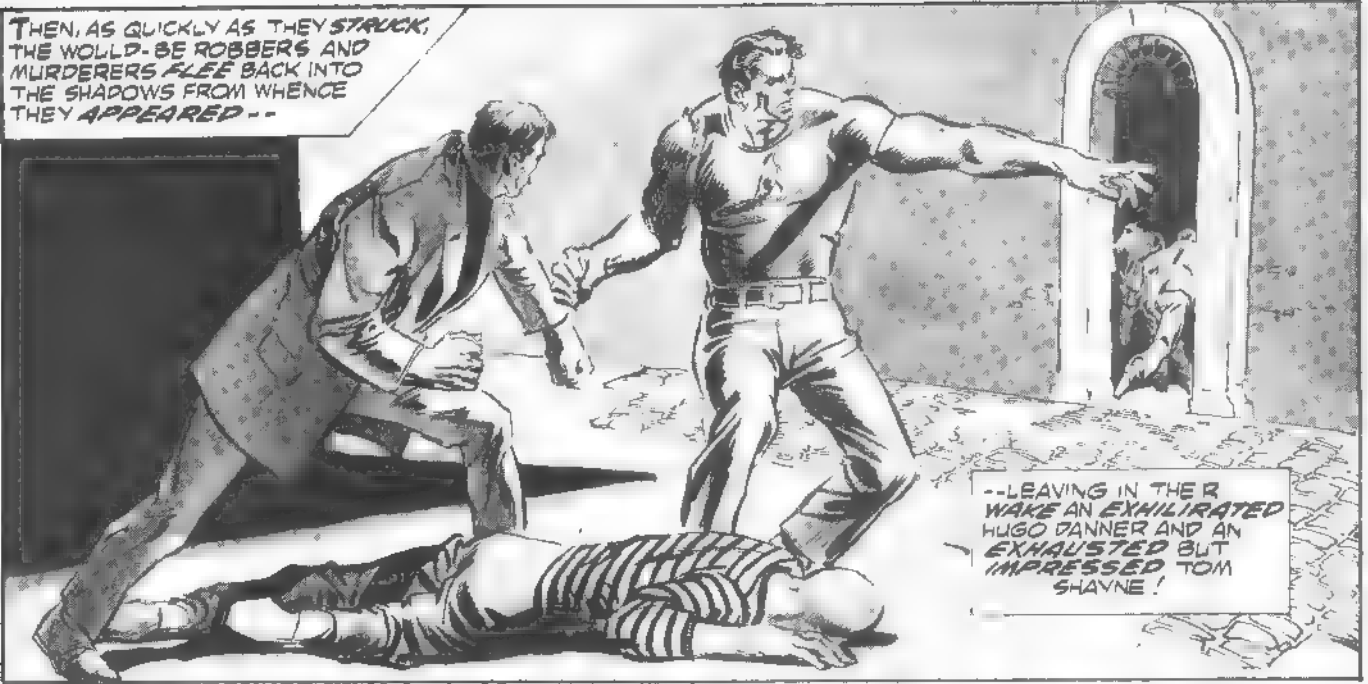
HIS HEART POUNDS FURIOUSLY AND THE WHITE-HOT
BLOOD OF ANGER COURSES THROUGH HUGO PANNER'S
VEINS AS HE ALMOST EFFORTLESSLY DISPATCHES THE
ATTACKERS, HOPING SHAYNE DIDN'T SEE THE STEEL
BLADE SHATTER AGAINST HIS CHEST--

--FOR, IT IS HIS
HOPE TO SERVE
IN THE WAR EFFORT
WHILE CONCEALING
FROM ALL BUT THE
ENEMY HIS
INHUMAN STRENGTH,
WHICH EVEN NOW HE
MUST CAREFULLY
HIDE FROM HIS
FRIEND AS HE PLTS
THE THIEVES TO
ROUT--



--WHILE AT THE
SAME TIME
ENJOYING THE
IMMENSE
ADVANTAGE
HE HOLDS OVER
HIS FOES
TOSsing THEM
ABOUT LIKE
INANIMATE RAG
DOLLS!

THEN, AS QUICKLY AS THEY STRUCK, THE WOULD-BE ROBBERS AND MURDERERS FLEE BACK INTO THE SHADOWS FROM WHENCE THEY APPEARED --



--LEAVING IN THEIR WAKE AN EXHILARATED HUGO DANNER AND AN EXHAUSTED BUT IMPRESSED TOM SHAYNE!

MUCH LATER, AFTER HOURS OF HEAVY DRINKING AND CONVERSATION, THE MEN PART, VOWING TO MEET THE FOLLOWING MORNING TO BEGIN THEIR MILITARY CAREERS!



GOOD-NIGHT, HUGO. I'M GLAD THAT WE'RE FRIENDS.

I ONLY HOPE WE'LL BECOME BETTER ACQUAINTED IN THE FUTURE.



HUGO PONDERES THE TONE IN SHAYNE'S VOICE AS HE MAKES HIS WAY TO A NEARBY HOTEL.

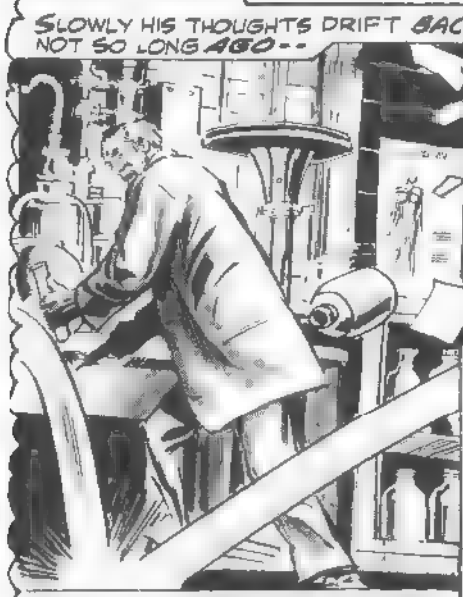
WAS HIS LAST SENTENCE A STATEMENT -- OR A QUESTION, A QUEST ON HUGO COULD NEVER ANSWER!

AND ALTHOUGH HUGO HAS TOLD HIS NEW FRIEND LITTLE OF HIS PAST, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MONTHS HE ONCE MORE DARES FEEL CLOSE TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING!

HE WONDERES AS HE WALKS THE NOW-DESERTED CITY STREETS -- WONDERES IF HE CAN EVER TELL ANYONE THE STUNNING SECRETS OF HIS PAST!



SLOWLY HIS THOUGHTS DRIFT BACK, BACK TO THE STORY HIS FATHER TOLD HIM.
NOT SO LONG AGO...



HIS PARENTS, ABEDNEGO AND MATILDA DANNER, HAD LIVED IN INDIAN CREEK, COLORADO, BEFORE THEIR SON'S BIRTH...



HAVING ISOLATED CERTAIN ALKALINE RADICALS IN INSECT BLOOD, HE INJECTED A SMALL KITTEN WITH THEM. AND WITHIN TWO WEEKS THE TINY ANIMAL HAD TERORIZED THE SMALL TOWN WITH ITS INCREDIBLE STRENGTH, MURDERING LIVESTOCK WITH THE EASE OF A PANTHER!

AND IT WAS THERE THE COLLEGE BIOLOGY PROFESSOR'S EXPERIMENTS WENT AWAY!



WHAT WAS MORE, THE ANIMAL'S SKIN WAS TOUGH ENOUGH TO REPEL BULLETS!



-- PROF. DANNER HAD BEEN FORCED TO POISON IT --

-- LEST THE FEAR-TERRIFIED TOWNSPEOPLE LEARN THAT HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ANIMAL'S RAMPAGE.



VERY WELL, MATILDA. POOR SAMSON'S DEAD AND BURIED... AND SO IS MY DISCOVERY!

AND I SWEAR I'LL NEVER USE IT AGAIN!

AND, DUE TO THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF CAGING THE TINY BEAST --

BUT IT WAS A PROMISE HE KNEW HE COULD NEVER KEEP! AND, WHEN MATILDA BECAME PREGNANT, THERE WAS NO WAY FOR HIM TO STOP HIMSELF...



FULLY AWARE OF THE DANGER TO HIS WIFE, HIS UNBORN CHILD, AND POSSIBLY ALL MANKIND, HE INJECTED THE FETUS WHILE HIS WIFE LAY DRUGGED AND WAITED IN TERROR FOR THE RESULTS...

FOR MONTH AFTER MONTH HIS FEAR CONSUMED HIM. THEN, AT LAST, MATILDA DELIVERED A HEALTHY SON -- HUGO DANNER!



AND SUCH WAS HIS JOY THAT HE MOMENTARILY PUT ASIDE HIS FEARS, UNTIL, A WEEK LATER, THEY CAME CRASHING DOWN UPON HIM WITH THE FORCE OF AN AVALANCHE!





BY THE TIME HE WAS A FEW MONTHS OLD, THE **STEEL CAGE** HIS FATHER HAD FASHIONED WOULD NO LONGER **CONTAIN** YOUNG HUGO PANNER, A FACT THE BABY **DEMONSTRATED** BEFORE THE **LOCAL MINISTER** --



TO **PLACATE** THE STARTLED REVEREND, MATILDA TOLD HIM SHE'D HAD THE BABY TO A SPECIALIST IN **DENVER** WHO'D ASSURED HER HUGO WAS MERELY **ADVANCED** FOR HIS AGE. BUT SHE **DOUBTED** HER FABRICATION HAD BEEN **ACCEPTED** --



BUT, IN **SPITE** OF HER **FEARS**, THE OUTSIDE WORLD **IGNORED** HER UNUSUAL BABY WITH THE EXCEPTION OF **IDLE GOSSIP**, WHILE HE CONTINUED TO DEVELOP AT AN INCREDIBLY RAPID RATE. AT AGE **THREE**, HE COULD EAT MORE IN **ONE** **SETTING** THAN HIS PARENTS COULD CONSUME IN A **WEEK**!



THE YEARS **FLEW BY**, AND IN NO TIME HE WAS **SIX** AND READY TO BEGIN **SCHOOL**. AND THOUGH HIS PARENTS HAD DONE ALL THEY **COULD** TO TEACH HIM **PEACEFUL MANNERS** AND THAT HE MUST **NEVER** EXHIBIT HIS EXTRAORDINARY STRENGTH IN **PUBLIC**, THEY LIVED IN **MORTAL FEAR** THAT A MERE LAD OF HIS AGE WOULD, SOONER OR LATER, LOSE HIS **TEMPER** AND BETRAY THE FRIGHTENING FACTS THEY'D FOUGHT SO HARD TO **CONCEAL** --



A FARMER'S SON WHO WAS LARGER THAN THE OTHER FIRST GRADERS HAD HEARD STORIES ABOUT HUGO--



THEN HE FLUNG IT ASIDE, OVER THE CIRCLE THAT SURROUNDED HIM, AND THE BULLY'S BODY FELL WITH A THUD!



HUGO WAS SICKENED BY WHAT HE HAD DONE. HE COULD SEE THE BULLY'S ARM WAS BROKEN. BUT AS HE WENT TO THE BOY'S AID, HIS FALLEN FOE COWERED AND CRIED OUT FOR THE **TEACHER...**



THE **TEACHER CAME--** AND SENT HUGO TO THE **BLACKSMITH** FOR A **WHIPPING**. HAD HE WON THE FIGHT IN A **NORMAL** FASHION, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED A **HERO**. BUT BECAUSE OF HIS **STRENGTH** HE WAS **SCORNE**D AND **PUNISH**ED.

AND FROM THAT DAY **FORWARD**, HE HAD KNOWN HIS POWER ONLY AS A **CURSE**. A DISEASE OR BLEMISH FROM WHICH THERE WAS NO **ESCAPE**! SO, IN THE **ENSUING** SEVERAL YEARS, HE BUILT A WORLD OF HIS **OWN--**



--A WORLD OF **DREAMS** AND **CONFECTIONS** IN WHICH HE LIVED WITH WHATEVER COMFORT IT **AFFORDED** HIM. AND **WITHIN** THIS WORLD, OUT OF THE SIGHT OF **OTHERS**, HE COULD AND **DID** USE HIS **STRENGTH** AS HE SAW **IT--**



--THEN **RIPPING** THEM INTO **SHREDS** AS EASILY AS A **NORMAL** MAN WOULD TEAR A **NEWSPAPER**! IT WAS A **WASTE** OF HIS **POWERS**, HE **KNEW**, BUT **HOW ELSE** COULD HE **UNLEASH** THEM? IT WAS A QUESTION HIS **YOUNG** MIND COULD NOT **ANSWER--**



--**UPROOTING** **NIGHTY** **TREES** FOR THE **SHEER** **PLEASURE** OF IT--



BUT, AFTER YEARS OF KEEPING HIS SECRET TO HIMSELF, HUGO DECIDED AT THE AGE OF TWELVE THAT HE MUST CONFIDE IN SOMEONE --



FATHER! I'VE BEEN WANTING TO TALK WITH YOU!

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN WELL... STRONG, YOU KNOW! BUT I DON'T THINK YOU REALIZE HOW STRONG!

YES, SON-- I'VE WONDERED, BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO-- OR WAS AFRAID TO INQUIRE.



DON'T BE AFRAID ANY LONGER, FATHER! I WANT TO SHOW YOU. WATCH!

FIRST OF ALL, I CAN LEAP--



--MAYBE EVEN HIGHER THAN THE EAGLE CAN FLY!

SEE?!



IT... IT'S EVEN MORE PHENOMENAL THAN I COULD HAVE IMAGINED!

THAT WAS ONLY A SMALL DEMONSTRATION. I HAVE JUMPED MUCH HIGHER!



WHUMP!

INDEED! AND WHAT ELSE, SON? WHAT OTHER SUPER-HUMAN FEATS CAN YOU PERFORM?



THUS, A SHORT TIME *LATER*, HUGO FOUND HIMSELF FACING THE WEBSTER FOOTBALL COACH--



ANOTHER RECRUIT, FORESMAN? WELL, I GUESS WE NEED ALL THE HELP WE CAN GET!

NOT WITH HUGO DANNER HERE ON OUR SIDE, COACH WOODMAN! HE'S GONNA BE A ONE-MAN TEAM! I CAN FEEL IT!



YEAH? WELL I'D SETTLE FOR AN *11-MAN TEAM* IF I COULD FIND ONE!

BUT COME ON SON! LET'S SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO!

JUST 165. HUH? KIND OF *SMALL*. BUT I'LL RESERVE JUDGEMENT UNTIL I SEE HOW YOU FARE ON THE FIELD.



AND HUGO DANNER FARED VERY WELL INDEED! IN HIS FIRST PRACTICE, HE BROKE INTERNATIONAL RECORDS IN THE 40- AND 100-YARD DASHES. THAT FEAT ALONE WAS MORE THAN ENOUGH TO ASSURE HIM A STARTING BERTH ON THE FOOTBALL TEAM.

BUT, HE HAD TO BE CAREFUL AFTER THAT FIRST, RECORD-SHATTERING PERFORMANCE-- CAREFUL TO MAKE HIS COACH AND TEAMMATES AWARE THAT HE WAS A *SPECIAL TALENT*-- BUT NOT TOO SPECIAL!

ALTHOUGH HE COULD VERY EASILY HAVE BEEN A ONE-MAN TEAM, IT WAS IMPORTANT TO HIM THAT HE MERELY ANCHOR THE SQUAD, USING HIS UNIQUE ABILITIES ONLY IN CRUCIAL SITUATIONS, AND EVEN THEN DISGUIISING THEM TO THE POINT THAT HIS DEEDS SEEMED MERELY SPECTACULAR AND NOT SUPER-HUMAN--

--AND THIS HE ACCOMPLISHED WITH THE GREATEST OF EASE! AS HIS FIRST SEASON DREW NEAR TO CLOSE, HUGO DANNER WAS THE STAR OF AN UNDEFEATED TEAM, THE FIRST ONE IN WEBSTER COLLEGE HISTORY, WITH ONLY ONE GAME REMAINING ON THE SCHEDULE--

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE FINAL GAME, THERE WAS A DANCE WHICH HUGO RELUCTANTLY ATTENDED AT THE PRODDING OF LEFTY FORESMAN. AT THAT DANCE, HE BEGAN TO FALL IN LOVE FOR THE FIRST TIME --



SO YOU'RE HUGO DANNER, THE BIG FOOTBALL JOCK! WANT TO TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF?

WELL, WE COULD DANCE IF YOU WANT TO. I'M AFRAID I'M NOT VERY GOOD AT IT.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT BUDDY! IRIS ALWAYS DOES THE LEADING!

AND SO THEY MOVED TOGETHER ACROSS THE FLOOR THEIR BODIES TOUCHING, AND HUGO'S SENSES OVERWHELMED BY THE SCENT AND FEEL OF HER. WITHOUT HER EVEN SPEAKING HE WAS CERTAIN HIS HEART WAS HERS FOR THE ASKING --

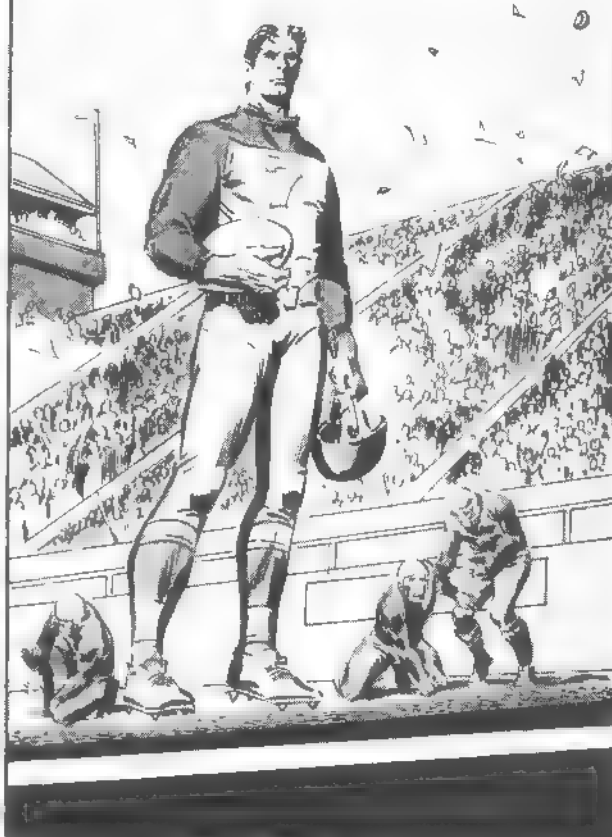


I LIKE YOU, HUGO. YOU'RE SO SILENT -- AND YET, SO STRONG!

WILL YOU WIN FOR ME TOMORROW? CAN YOU PROMISE, YOU WILL?

IF YOU CAN, AND IF YOU KEEP YOUR PROMISE -- I SHAN'T BE ABLE TO REFUSE YOU ANYTHING!

HE PROMISED, KNOWING WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY THAT HE COULD INDEED KEEP HIS WORD. THEN, WHEN THE BATTLE ON THE GRIDIRON HAD ENDED AND THE VICTORY BELONGED TO WEBSTER, HE STOOD AMIDST THE RINGING CHEERS OF THOUSANDS, THINKING ONLY OF THE GIRL IRIS AND WHAT HE HOPED THE NIGHT HELD FOR THEM --



THEN, WHILE HIS TEAMMATES CELEBRATED ON THE FIELD, HUGO RUSHED FOR THE LOCKER ROOM--

QUICK! IS THERE ANY MESSAGE FOR ME?



GREAT GAME, HUGO! YEAH--A GIRL LEFT THIS FOR YOU! SOME DISH!



At my hotel at ten, then!
Iris

THEN, AFTER A VERY FAST SHOWER--

AH, SO YOU RECEIVED MY NOTE! I'M GLAD--



--AND VERY IMPRESSED WITH THE WAY YOU KEPT YOUR PROMISE!

DO COME IN-- AND TELL ME IF YOU ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT!

I TRY TO, RIS!
I TRY VERY HARD!

I SEE! THEN I MUST TRY VERY HARD NOT TO DISAPPOINT YOU!



A GIRL WITH YOUR EXPERIENCE--HAVING TRAVELED THE GLOBE? NO, YOU WON'T DISAPPOINT ME!



I WONDER IF I DO, IT WILL ONLY BE BECAUSE YOU'RE SO--DIFFERENT--FROM ANY MAN I'VE EVER KNOWN!



BUT *HUGO* GRIEVED. FOR MONTHS HE REGRETTED HAVING DESERTED HER, UNTIL A LETTER FROM HIS FATHER PROVE HER FROM HIS MIND--

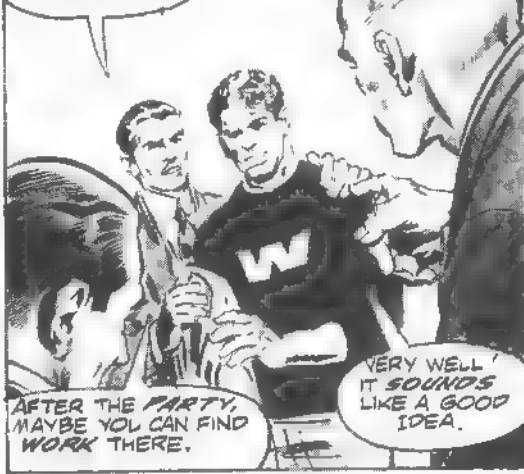


MY PARENTS ARE BANKRUPT! I'LL HAVE TO LEAVE SCHOOL--
OR FIND SOME SORT OF SUMMER JOB!



THEN, A FEW DAYS LATER--

GO TO NEW YORK WITH US HUGO!



AFTER THE PARTY, MAYBE YOU CAN FIND WORK THERE.

VERY WELL! IT SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD IDEA.

BUT AFTER A LONG, DRUNKEN FRATERNITY REUNION, HUGO'S FIRST TRIP TO THE CITY TURNED INTO A NIGHTMARE--



I LIKE YOU FELLA! LET'S GO TO MY PLACE, IF YOU HAVE ANY MONEY, THAT IS!

HIS TOLERANCE TO ALCOHOL HAD ALWAYS BEEN NEARLY NON-EXISTENT. SO, HIS MIND, SWIMMING, HE'D ACCEPTED THE GIRL'S INVITATION AND GONE TO A SLEAZY HOTEL WITH HER--



-- ONLY TO AWAKEN THE NEXT MORNING WITH A SCREAMING HEADACHE AND AN EMPTY WALLET!



SO, WITH SCHOOL RECESSED FOR THE SUMMER AND HIS FRIENDS DEPARTED FOR THEIR HOMES, HE ROAMED THE COLD, UNFAMILIAR STREETS OF NEW YORK--



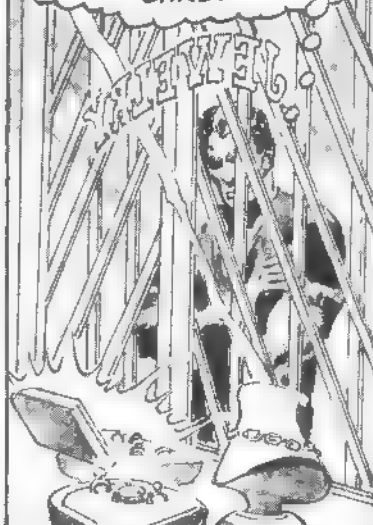
--WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A PENNY TO BUY FOOD FOR HIS ACHING STOMACH, OR A FRIENDLY VOICE TO COMFORT THE GNAWING LONELINESS WHICH OVERWHELMED HIM.

FINALLY, AFTER MORE THAN 24 HOURS, HE COULD WITHSTAND THE HUNGER NO LONGER--



IT IS WRONG! BUT I MUST EAT --I MUST!

THE STORE IS CLOSED! AND IT WILL BE NOTHING FOR ME TO BEND THE BARS!



THERE! NOW I'LL BREAK THE GLASS--



--AND JUST BORROW A FEW JEWELS! I HAVE NO CHOICE!



I'LL REPAY THE OWNER AS SOON AS I FIND A JOB. IT WILL JUST BE A LOAN.

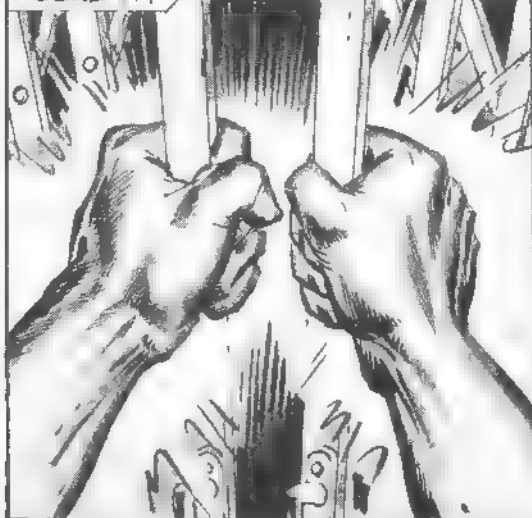
BUT IF THAT IS TRUE, WHY CAN'T I DO IT? WHAT'S STOPPING ME?



AS AN ANSWER TO HIS OWN QUESTION, HE SUDDENLY, ANGRILY, SNAPPED THE BARS BACK INTO PLACE--

IT'S NO USE! MY CONSCIENCE WON'T LET ME STEAL!

THEN, WHILE HIS STOMACH WEPT AT THE EXPENSE OF HIS RIGHTEDNESS, HE CAREFULLY BENT EACH AND EVERY BAR INTO THE EXACT POSITION IN WHICH HE'D FOUND IT!



AND NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON AS IT TURNED OUT! FOR, AS HE STARED LONGINGLY AT THE FORTUNE WHICH COULDN'T BE HIS--



HEY THERE! YOU! WHAT'RE YOU DOIN' HANGIN' AROUND THAT STORE?!

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP TO, AND I'VE CALGT YOU COLD! SO STAND STILL AND I'LL TAKE YOU ALONG PEACEFULLY!

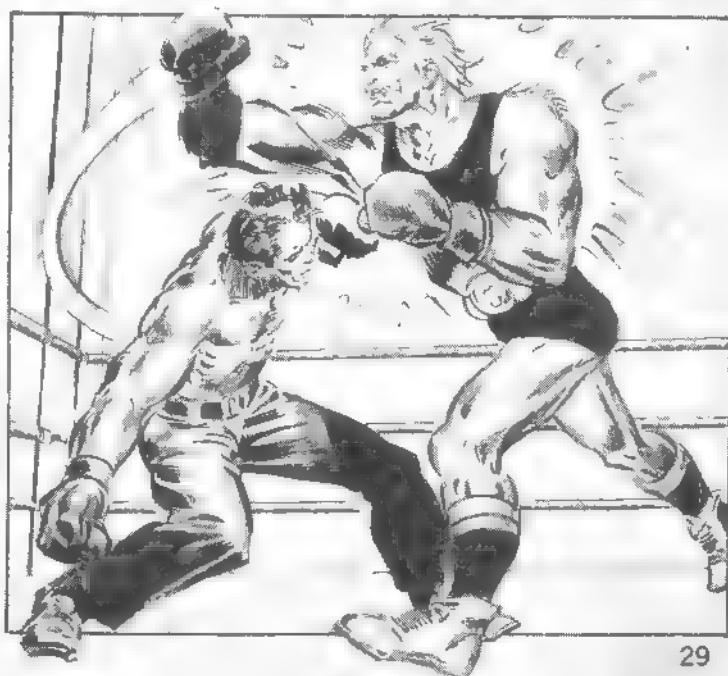
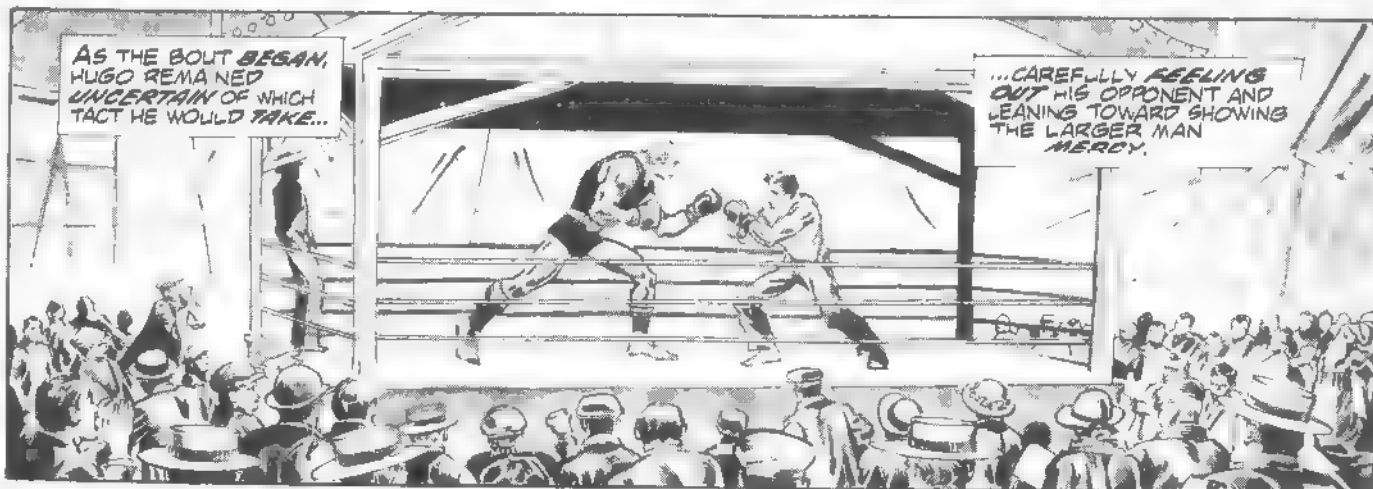


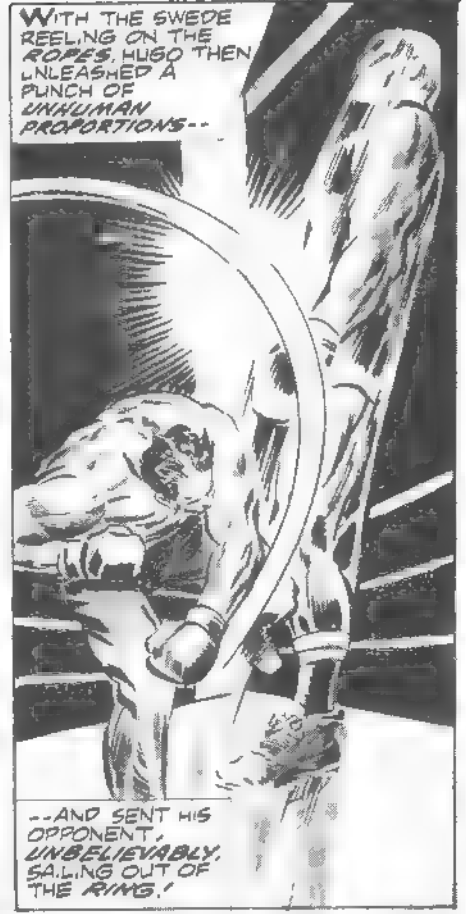
HE SAT ON BENCHES AND WALKED ALONG THE CROWDED MIDWAY, TAKING IN THE SIGHTS, SOUNDS AND SMELLS, DESPERATELY WISHING HE HAD THE MONEY TO BECOME A PART OF THEM --



THEN, AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT, HE CAME ACROSS A SIDE-SHOW WHICH WAS TAILOR-MADE FOR HIS OWN UNIQUE ABILITIES --







HOURS LATER, HUGO SAT ALONE IN A DESERTED CONEY ISLAND BAR, WONDERING WHAT HE MIGHT DO FOR THE SUMMER TO EARN ENOUGH MONEY TO RETURN TO WEBSTER IN THE FALL--

THERE'D BEEN NO WOMEN IN HUGO'S LIFE SINCE IRIS, AND HE SUDDENLY FELT THE NEED FOR ONE. WITHOUT HESITATION, HE ASKED HER TO JOIN HIM...

HELLO, I'M CHARLOTTE. BUY ME A DRINK-- AND I'LL SHOW YOU A GOOD TIME.

THEN, AFTER BUYING HER SEVERAL DRINKS AND A SOLID MEAL, HE FOUND HIMSELF BEING LED UP THE STAIRS TO HER APARTMENT--

DON'T BE SHY. NOW IT DON'T FIT A HANDSOME BOY LIKE YOU, COME ON!

I'M NOT SHY, BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW YOU DON'T OWE ME ANYTHING.

--SO TENDER IN FACT, THAT BY MORNING HE'D AGREED TO MOVE IN WITH HER. HE'D PROMISED TO CARE FOR HER, AND SHE'D PROMISED TO BE FAITHFUL TO HIM. AND WITH THAT AGREEMENT, THEY SET OFF TO SEE THE SIGHTS--

WE'LL BE GOOD FOR EACH OTHER, CHARLOTTE. YOU'LL SEE!

I HOPE SO, HUGO! I WANT TO BE GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU.

THEN, WITH MONEY THEIR ONLY REMAINING PROBLEM--

THE GREAT WALDO STRONGEST MAN

THAT'S IT! THAT'S WHAT I CAN DO FOR A LIVING! I'M REALLY VERY STRONG, YOU KNOW.

WAIT HERE WHILE I SEE THE MANAGER. IN A FEW MINUTES, I'LL HAVE THE GREAT WALDO'S JOB.





AND HOW PROPHECIC HER WORDS TURNED OUT TO BE! WHILE SHE CONTINUED TO LIVE AND WORK WITH HUGO THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER, IT BECAME INCREASINGLY EVIDENT THAT SOON THE DAY WOULD COME WHEN HE WOULD LEAVE HER--



THAT DAY CAME IN LATE AUGUST, WHEN UNEXPECTED PATRONS AT THE SHOW HAPPENED TO BE NONE OTHER THAN LEFTY AND IRIS--

CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? IT'S HUGO-- PLAYING STRONGMAN!

HE ISN'T PLAYING, LEFTY... AND WE BOTH KNOW IT! LET'S SEE HIM AFTER THE SHOW!



WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? GLAD TO SEE YOU.

NOT HALF AS GLAD AS WE ARE TO SEE YOU-- ESPECIALLY IRIS!

I DO BELIEVE YOU TWO KNOW EACH OTHER

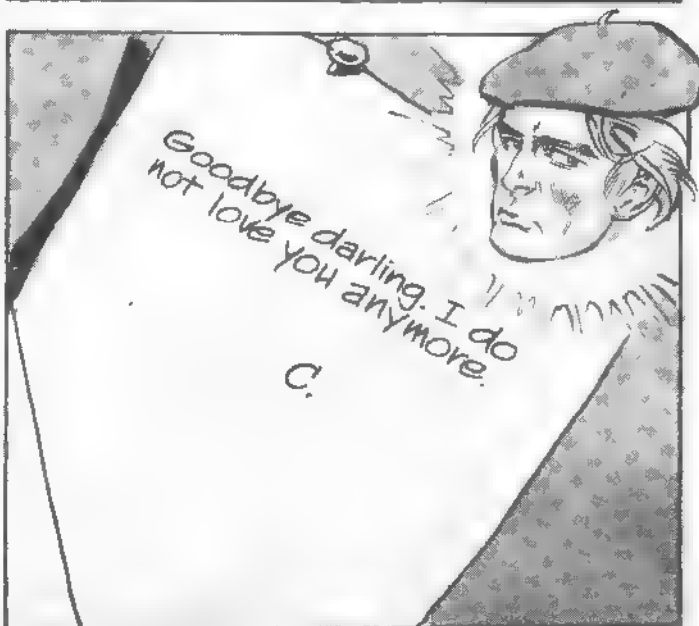
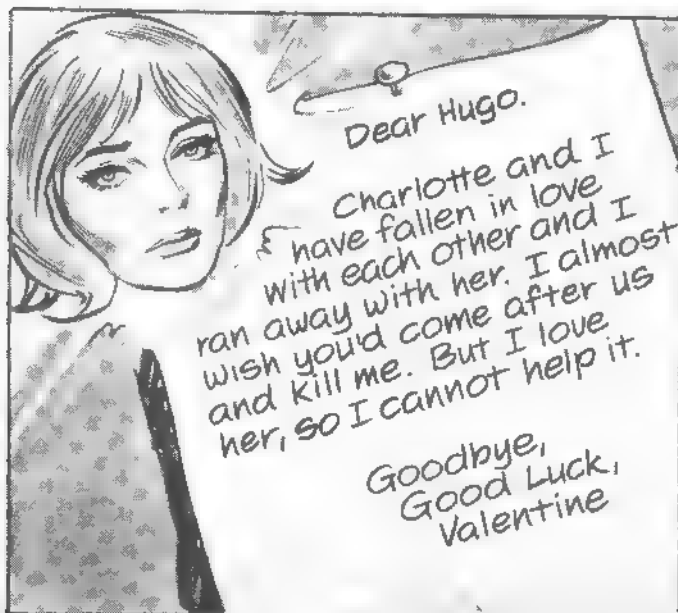
YOU BELIEVE RIGHT! HOW ARE YOU, IRIS?

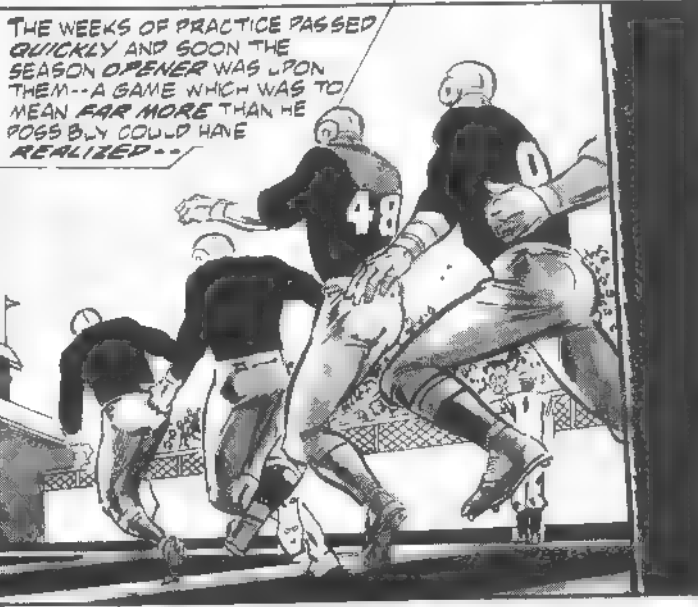


NOT AS WELL AS YOU, HUGO-- OBVIOUSLY!

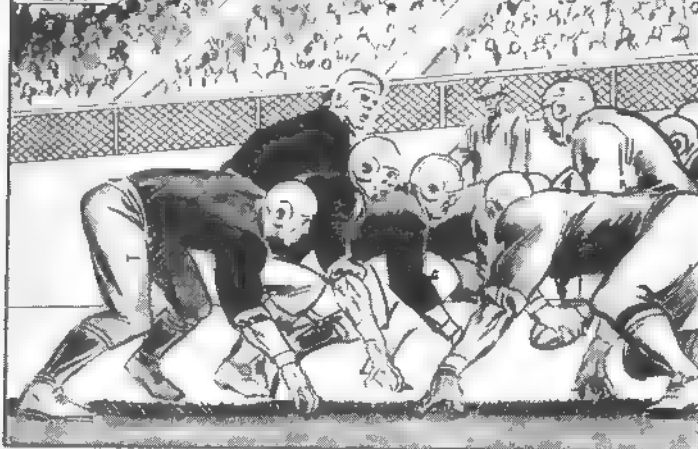
OH, EXCUSE ME. THIS IS MY FRIEND AND ASSISTANT CHARLOTTE.

NICE TO MEET YOU. NOW I'M SURE YOU WON'T MIND IF WE -- BORROW HUGO FOR A FEW HOURS -- FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE?!

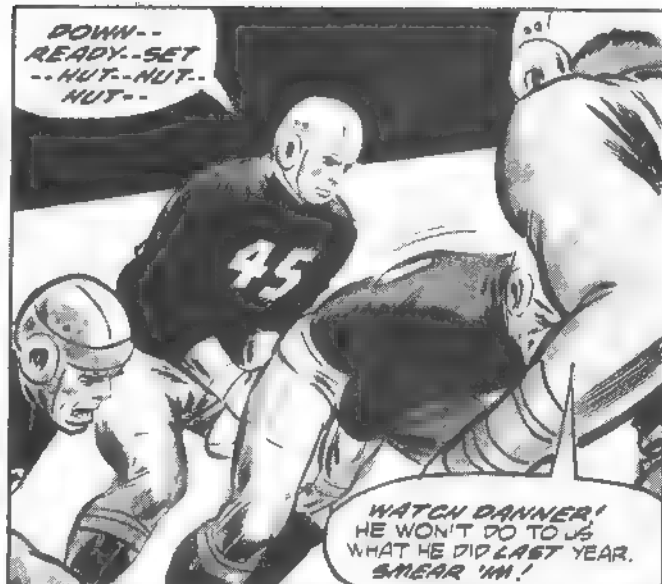




FROM THE OPENING KICKOFF, HUGO WAS INTOXICATED BY THE ROAR OF THE CROWD, THE SCENT OF HUMAN SWEAT IN HIS NOSTRILS. TWICE WEBSTER RAN THE BALL WITHOUT HANDING OFF TO HIM. HIS HEART POUNDED AS THEY CAME UP TO THE LINE FOR THE THIRD DOWN PLAY.



DOWN--
READY--SET
--NUT--NUT--
NUT--



HUGO FELT THE BALL IN HIS BUT--



--AND AS HIS LEGS BEGAN TO THRUST HIM FORWARD LIKE PILEDRIVERS, HE KNEW HE WOULD NOT BE STOPPED!



ONE BY ONE, HE SHED THE DEFENDERS ASIDE, HIS SIGHTS SET ON THE GOAL LINE, KNOWING FOR CERTAIN THAT NO ONE COULD KEEP HIM FROM CROSSING IT!

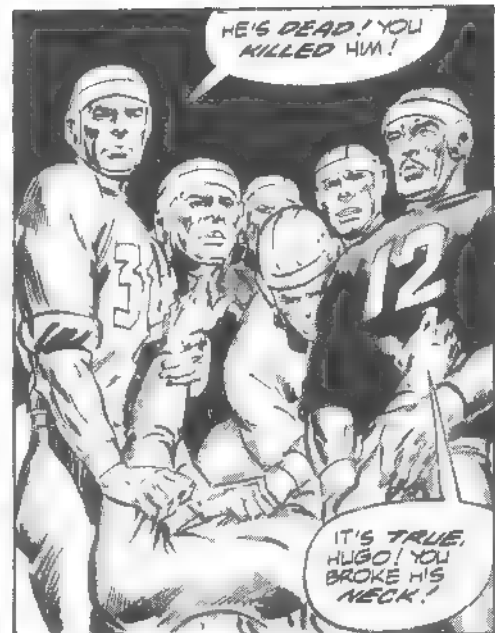
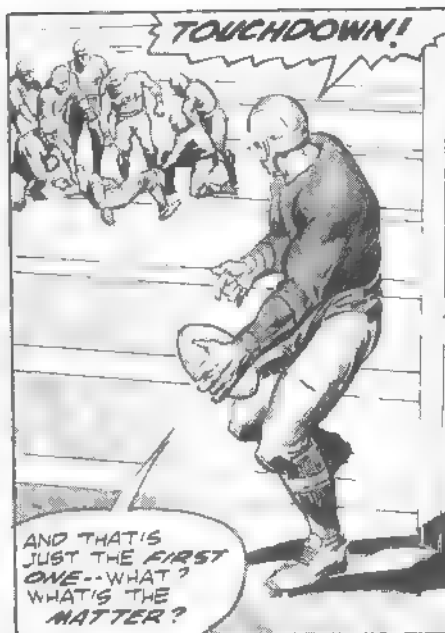


FOR AN INSTANT HE THOUGHT PERHAPS HE WAS MAKING IT LOOK TOO EASY AS HE PLOWED THROUGH THE DEFENSE--

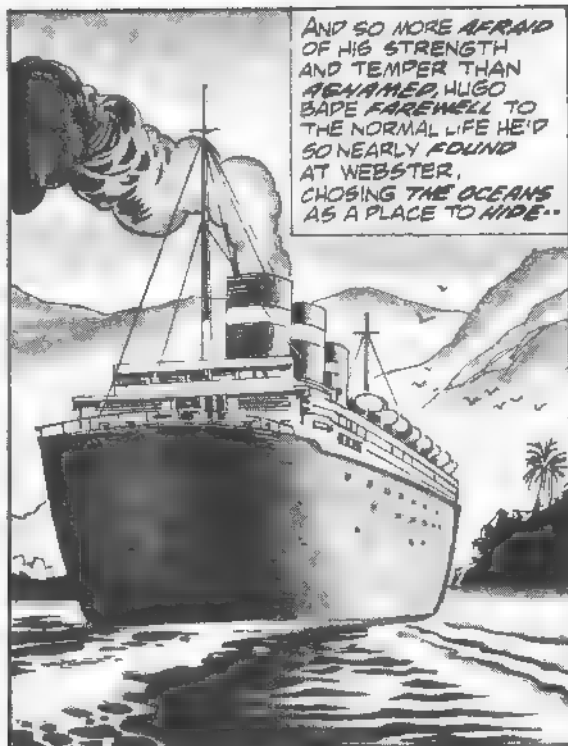
THEN, SUDDENLY HE REALIZED ONLY ONE LOSE DEFENDER STOOD BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE SEASON'S FIRST SIX POINTS--



--AND FORGETTING HIS DOUBTS, HE SMASHED THE PALM OF HIS HAND INTO THE OPPONENT'S FACE, OBLIVIOUS TO THE SICKENING SNAP WHICH ACCOMPANIED THE CONTACT!







AND SO MORE AFRAID OF HIS STRENGTH AND TEMPER THAN **FEARED** HUGO BADE FAREWELL TO THE NORMAL LIFE HE'D SO NEARLY FOUND AT WEBSTER, CHOOSING THE OCEANS AS A PLACE TO HIDE--



THEN, AFTER MONTHS ABOARD THE KATRINA, HE DISCOVERED THE ART OF PEARL-DIVING DURING A STOPOVER IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC--



I'VE DONE WELL AT THIS PEARL BUSINESS!



HE'D DONE SO WELL, IN FACT, THAT ON THE SHIP'S ARRIVAL IN FRANCE, HE CASHED IN THE PEARLS FOR ENOUGH MONEY TO SUPPORT HIMSELF HANDSOMELY FOR A PERIOD OF AT LEAST SEVERAL MONTHS!



THEN, HAVING FOUND SOME DEGREE OF PEACE WITH HIMSELF AT SEA, HE DECIDED TO REMAIN IN EUROPE FOR A TIME! AND IT WAS THERE THAT HE MET SHAYNE, THE MAN WHO HELD THE KEY TO HIS DESTINY!



NOW THE TIME FOR REMINISCENCING WAS PAST! SHAYNE WAS WALKING TOWARD HIS TABLE AT A SMALL BISTRO--

--AND IT WAS TIME FOR THEM TO REPORT TO THE FOREIGN LEGION THEY'D JOINED ONLY THE DAY BEFORE!



I'M GLAD I MET YOU, TOM-- AND THAT WE'VE ENTERED THIS WAR TOGETHER!

FOR PERHAPS IN COMBAT, I CAN FIND MY TRUE CALLING!

OR DEATH, MY FRIEND! NEVER FORGET THAT SMALL FACT!

THEN FOLLOWING ONLY A FEW WEEKS OF TRAINING HUGO FOUND HIMSELF GROWING IMPATIENT...

--IMPATIENT TO LEAVE THE GAMES OF WAR BEHIND AND TO TASTE THE STING OF REAL COMBAT!



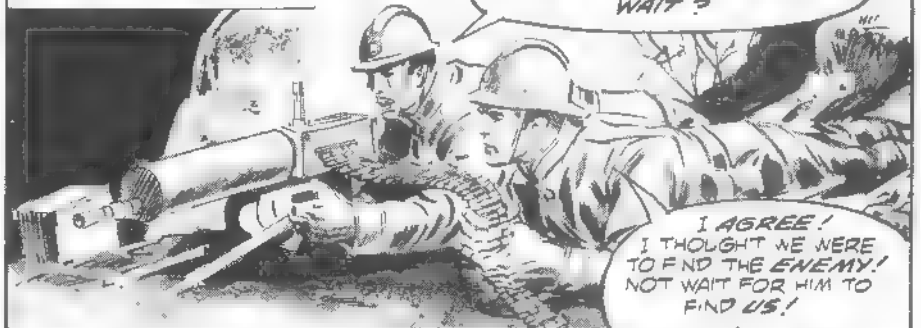
AT LAST, THE MOMENT CAME! HUGO DANNER AND TOM SHAYNE FOUND THEMSELVES AT THE FRONT, LISTENING TO THEIR FINAL ORDERS, THEIR HEARTS POUNDING WITH ANTICIPATION AT THE ROAR OF CANNONS IN THE FAR DISTANCE!

THEN, THEY WERE IN THE FIELD, THEIR MISSION TO FIND AND ENGAGE THE ENEMY...



--AND TO KILL HIM AT RISK OF THEIR OWN LIVES!

SO THIS IS WAR? ALL OF THAT TRAINING TO LIE IN THE MUD AND WAIT?



I AGREE! I THOUGHT WE WERE TO FIND THE ENEMY! NOT WAIT FOR HIM TO FIND US!

THEN WITHOUT WARNING, THE HELL OF WAR WAS ALL AROUND THEM!!



THE MAN ON HUGO'S RIGHT
EMITTED A NOISE LIKE A
SQUEAL AND JUMPED UP IN
THE AIR! HE HAD BEEN HIT!



HUGO'S GREAT STRENGTH
SEEMED TO HAVE LEFT HIM,
AND IN ITS PLACE WAS
COMPLETE ENERVATION!

THE SOLDIER HAD FALLEN, STOOD
UP QUICKLY, THEN FALLEN AGAIN!
HIS FOOT KICKED AFTER HE
LAY DOWN--THEN HE WAS STILL!



THE RUMBLINGS IN THE SKY GREW LOUDER AND
BLOTTED OUT ALL OTHER SOUND!



NO TIME TO DWELL ON
ONE LIFE, MAN! WE HAVE
TO KEEP MOVING!

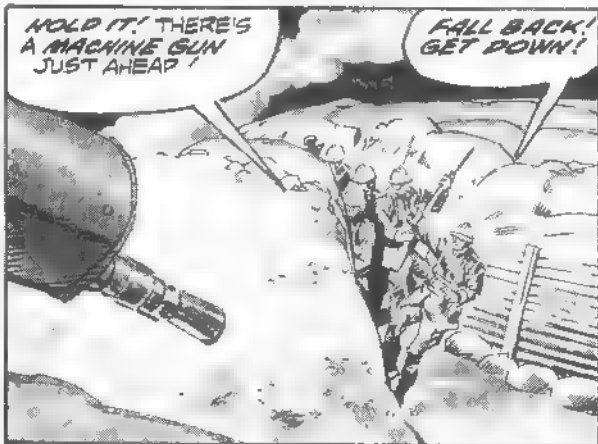


MOVING--? YES! WE CAN'T LET THE
ENEMY ADVANCE!

THIS FEELING-- CAN IT
BE FEAR? IS HUGO
DANNER AFRAID?

HOLD IT! THERE'S
A MACHINE GUN
JUST AHEAD!

FALL BACK!
GET DOWN!



HUGO STOOD FROZEN,
HIS EYES RIVETED ON
THE ENEMY! WAS THIS
IT? HE WONDERED! WAS
THIS HOW IT WOULD
END?



AS HIS COMRADES
SCRAMBLED FOR THEIR
LIVES, HE STARED
DIRECTLY INTO THE
GERMAN DEATH-SPRAY...

--SLIGHTLY STAGGERED BY
THE FORCE OF ENEMY STEEL
AS IT POUNDED HIS BODY WITH
READY FORCE!



THEN, AS SLUDDENLY AS IT HAD *BEGUN*, THE SHOOTING *STOPPED!* AND, SLIGHTLY *PAZED*, HE SURVEYED THE *CARNAGE* WHICH *SURROUNDED* HIM--



--THINKING THAT, LIKE THE *REST*, HE MUST BE AT THE *LEAST* SEVERELY *WOUNDED!*

BUT TO HIS *SURPRISE*, HE DISCOVERED THERE WERE MERELY *SMALL RED WELTS* WHERE THE *BULLETS* HAD *STRUCK* HIM--



--AND IN THAT MOMENT, HE REALIZED WHAT HE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN ALL ALONG: HE WAS *INVULNERABLE!*



SUDDENLY, HE *ROARED* TO HIS FEET, *SNATCHED* HIS *RIFLE*, AND *VAULTED* TOWARD THE *GERMAN HELMETS* JUST AHEAD--



--LEAPING SO HIGH AND FAR IN A SINGLE JUMP THAT THE ENEMY COULD ONLY WATCH IN *STUNNED ASTONISHMENT!*



IN ONE LEAP HE WAS *HALFWAY* TO THEM! IN ANOTHER HE WAS *UPON* THEM--

--SNAPPING THEIR *BONES* LIKE *THWAS* AS AT LAST HE WAS ABLE TO UNLEASH THE *FULL FURY* OF THE *MIGHT* WHICH WAS HIS *ALONE* AMONG ALL MEN!





LIKE A HUMAN JUGGERNAUT HE WADED THROUGH THE HAPLESS ENEMY--



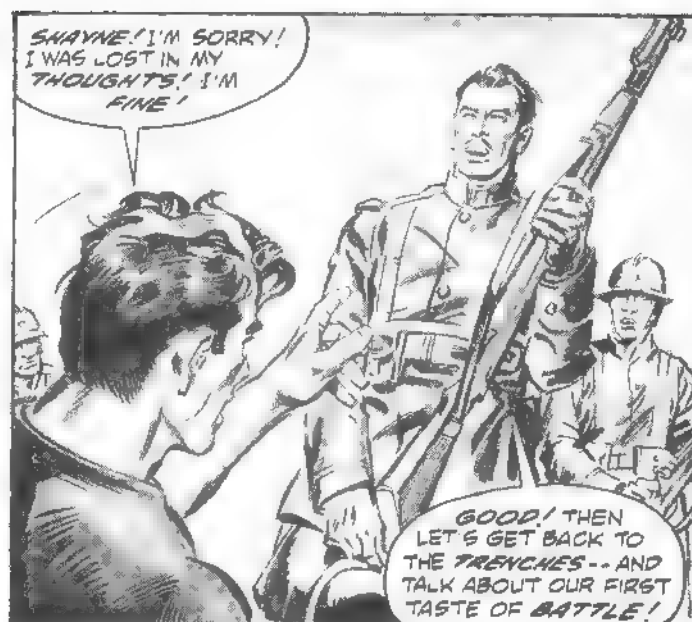
-- A ONE-MAN ARMY ABLE TO WIN ANY BATTLE AGAINST ANY FOE!



EVEN WHEN ATTACKED FROM BEHIND, HIS LIGHTNING-FAST REACTIONS COULD OVERCOME ANY DISADVANTAGE!



THEN IN WHAT SEEMED NO MORE THAN SECONDS, THE FIGHTING CEASED! THE BEFUPLED ENEMY RETREATED, IN THE FACE OF A FOE IT COULD NOT FATHOM, MUCH LESS FIGHT! AND, IN THE BLOODY TROPHY ROOM OF VICTORY, HUGO DANNER SAT PAZED, UNABLE TO FULLY COMPREHEND THE CARNAGE HE HAD WROUGHT!

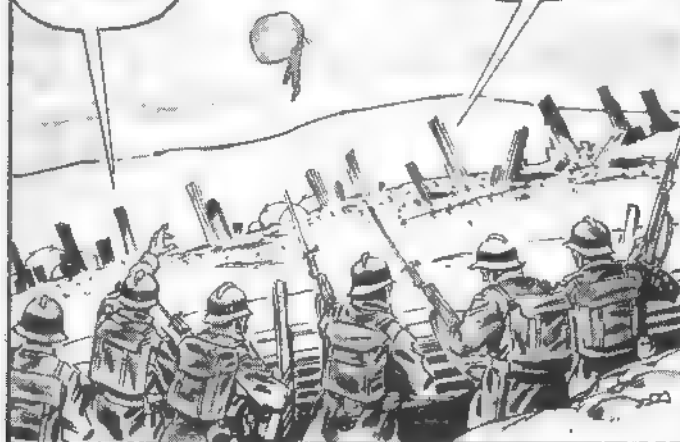




THE AGING CAPTAIN DISMISSED WHAT HE'D JUST SEEN WITH HIS OWN EYES, ATTRIBUTING THE MIRAGE TO NO MORE THAN *BATTLE FATIGUE*! BUT, LESS THAN THIRTY MINUTES LATER--

LOOK! WHAT'S THAT COMING AT US FROM THE REAR?

IT LOOKS LIKE--*DANGER*! BUT IT CAN'T BE--NOT FLYING!



THESE SUPPLIES SHOULD BE OF *HELP*, CAPTAIN!

WHERE--HOW--?



I FEAR I CANNOT ALLOW YOU TO QUESTION MY *METHODS*, SIR! BUT PLEASE ACCEPT THESE MUCH-NEEDED SUPPLIES!

AND INDEED, NO ONE DID QUESTION HUGO DANNER'S *MIRACULOUS FEAT*! THEY WERE, TO THE LAST MAN, TOO HUNGRY AND DESPERATE FOR AMMUNITION--



--ALL OF THEM SAVE THE INCREDU-
LOUS CAPTAIN CROWAN!

OUT WITH IT, PRIVATE! HOW DID YOU DO IT?



DO WHAT, SIR--WHAT ANY OTHER SOLDIER WOULD DO--IF HE COULD?



HERE--PERHAPS SOME *COGNAC* WILL SOOTHE YOUR NERVES, CAPTAIN!

YES! PERHAPS YOU ARE *RIGHT*--STILL, I CANNOT FORGET WHAT I SAW YOU ACCOMPLISH!

AFTER A *DRINK*--I MUST REPORT TO MY SUPERIORS!



THUS, SEVERAL WEEKS LATER--

I TELL YOU, GENTLEMEN, THIS MAN COULD WIN THE WAR SINGLE-HANDED!

YOU'RE QUITE MAD, CAPTAIN-- BUT BRING HIM IN, SO I CAN PROVE IT!

PRIVATE DANNER! YOU WILL STEP FORWARD, PLEASE!

DURING THE LONG DAYS OF BATTLE JUST PASSED, HUGO ONCE MORE HAD FOUND HIS ZEST FOR WAR! AND, WANTING TO FIGHT ON A LARGER SCALE, HE APPROACHED THE SKEPTICAL GENERALS WITH GREAT ANTICIPATION!

SHOW THEM, DANNER! THAT IS AN ORDER!

ANYTHING MY COMMANDERS ASK, CAPTAIN!

WE UNDERSTAND YOU ARE STRONG! IF THAT IS TRUE--BRING US A...A SEVENTY-FIVE FROM OUR ARTILLERY

SURELY THAT WILL BE NO PROBLEM--IF YOU ARE SO STRONG AS THE CAPTAIN SAYS!

THE BLOOD COURSED FURIOUSLY THROUGH HUGO'S BRAIN AS HE ROSE TO THE CHALLENGE--

NO LONGER DID HE CARE IF THE SECRET OF HIS STRENGTH REMAINED SUCH! HE ONLY WISHED A MORE IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE WAR! AND HE KNEW THE WAY TO GET IT--

LOOK! COME AND SEE HOW WE LEAPS! IT IS ALMOST AS IF HE COULD FLY!

COME WATCH--AND YOU WILL LAUGH AT NEITHER OF US AGAIN!



IN LESS THAN A MINUTE HUGO RETURNED FROM THE BATTERY WITH HIS CARGO IN TOW--

WELL WHAT SAY YOU NOW? WILL YOU NOT BELIEVE YOUR OWN EYES?

IT IS UNBELIEVABLE! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE-- SOME SORT OF CIRCUS TRICK?



IT IS NO TRICK GENERAL! AS I'VE ALREADY TOLD YOU, I AM STRONGER THAN MOST MEN!

BUT I CAN SEE YOU CONTINUE TO DOUBT THAT!



THEREFORE, I WILL GIVE YOU FURTHER PROOF!

WHAT PROOF DO YOU SPEAK OF?



WAIT--AND I WILL RETURN WITH IT MOMENTARILY!



DID YOU SEE THAT LEAD? TELL ME THAT IS A TRICK!

I--I DO NOT KNOW! PERHAPS THE HEAT--



IT'S NOT THE HEAT GENERAL! THIS GERMAN SOLDIER I SNATCHED FROM THE ENEMY LINES SHOULD CONVINCE YOU!

BUT THE FRONT IS MILES AWAY-- AND HE WENT THERE AND BACK IN ONLY SECONDS!!



HOURS LATER, HUGO RETURNED TO THE FRONT LINES...

...UNCERTAIN AS TO THE RESULTS OF HIS DEMONSTRATION AND RELIEVED TO BE BACK AMONG THE COMRADES WHO ACCEPTED HIM AS MERELY ANOTHER WEARY SOLDIER!



GLAD YOU'RE BACK, MY FRIEND! AFRAID I'VE TAKEN ANOTHER GERMAN BULLET!

AGAIN! IS IT BAD, TOM?

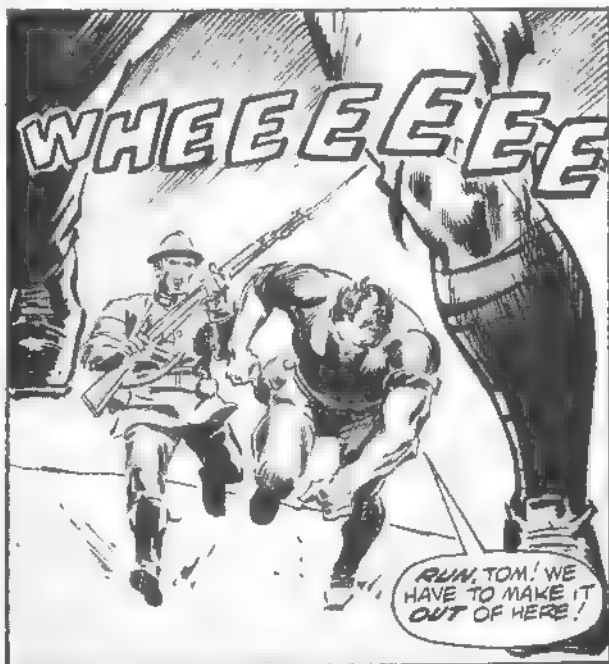


BAD? YES-- BUT NOT MY WOUND! IT'S THE WAR, HUGO! I NEVER REALIZED IT WOULD BE LIKE THIS!

IT'S INSANITY! MEN MURDERING EACH OTHER THIS WAY! IF I LIVE TO TELL--



THEY'VE ZEROED-IN ON US! WE MUST GET OUT OF THE TRENCH!



WHEEEEEEE

RUN, TOM! WE HAVE TO MAKE IT OUT OF HERE!



KER WOOOM!

A RED FURY HAD ENVELOPED THE TWO FRIENDS! HUGO WAS CRUSHED FEROCIOUSLY AGAINST THE GROUND, LYING THERE ACHING, HIS EARS SINGING AND HIS HEAD DIZZY!



THEN, SLOWLY, THE FURY ABATED! HE BEGAN TO STRUGGLE TO HIS FEET, AMAZED TO FIND LOCOMOTION POSSIBLE! AND--HE REMEMBERED SHAYNE!

SLOWLY, CAREFULLY, HE SEARCHED IN THE SMOKING, STINKING MUCK HIS SHELL-SHOCKED BRAIN REELING WITH A DREADFUL APPREHENSION! WHERE WAS HIS FRIEND? WHAT HAD THE GERMAN SHELL DONE TO HIM? HE HIMSELF HAD SURVIVED IT SO COULD NOT TOM SHAYNE HAVE SURVIVED IT AS WELL?



SUDDENLY, HE SAW IT, THE BLOOPY, SHOULDERING HEAD AND SHOULDERS ALL THAT REMAINED OF THE ONLY MAN HE'D ALLOWED TO BECOME CLOSE TO HIM FOR SO MANY MONTHS! AND IN THAT MOMENT, WHITE ELECTRICITY CRACKLED IN HUGO PANNER'S HEAD!



YOU FILTHY SWINE! YOU GOT HIM-- KILLED HIM-- AND I SWEAR I'LL MAKE YOU PAY FOR IT!

I'LL SHOVE YOUR FILTHY HIDES DOWN THE DEVIL'S THROAT AND THROUGH HIS GUTS!



INTO THE BUBBLING, DOOM-
RIDDEN CHAOS HE CHARGED,
WAVING HIS ARMS AND
SHOUTING MANIACAL
PROFANITIES, WADING
THROUGH THE STARTLED
ENEMY LIKE A ONE-MAN
ARMY!

THEN
WHEN
HE
COULD
FIND
NO MORE
GERMANS TO
KILL, HE
STOOD ALONE
AMONGST THE
CARNAGE HE'D
CREATED DIPPED
IN SCARLET,
DRIPPING THE
BLOOD OF A
VANQUISHED
ENEMY!

NEITHER BULLETS NOR BAYONETS
COULD STOP HIM AS HE TOSSED
GERMAN CORPSES OUT OF THE
TRENCHES BY THE DOZEN!

COME ON, MY
COMRADES! I'VE KILLED
THEM ALL! COME AND
HELP ME SEND THEM
DOWN TO HELL!



FINALLY, IT WAS OVER! THE FRENCH TROOPS POURED THROUGH THE GERMAN LINES! AND HUGO DANNER AT LAST, SAT DOWN TO REST!

YOU ALL RIGHT, SON?



ALL RIGHT? NO! I'LL NEVER BE ALL RIGHT AGAIN! NOT AFTER WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH!

BUT I'LL FIGHT AGAIN! AND I'LL KEEP FIGHTING--UNTIL THERE'S NOT A SINGLE ENEMY SOLDIER LEFT ALIVE!



LATER, HUGO! RIGHT NOW, YOU NEED A REST!

LET'S GET HIM TO THE WAGON! HE NEEDS MORE THAN JUST A REST!



AND NEED HE DID! SUFFERING MORE FROM MENTAL FATIGUE THAN PHYSICAL INJURIES HUGO SLEPT FOR THREE DAYS IN A HOSPITAL BEFORE HE AWAKENED--

WHERE AM I? A HOSPITAL? BUT I BELONG ON THE FRONT!

AND YOU'LL BE BACK THERE SOON ENOUGH! BUT FOR NOW, YOU HAVE VISITORS!



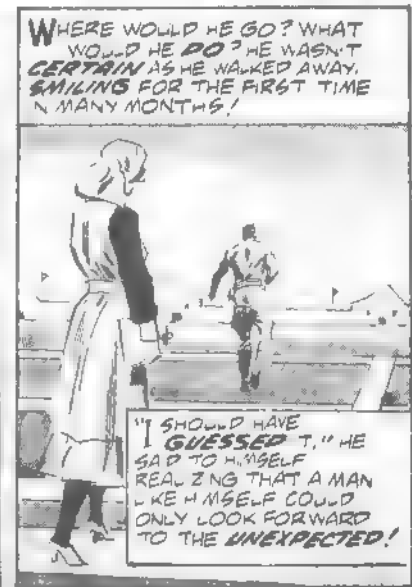
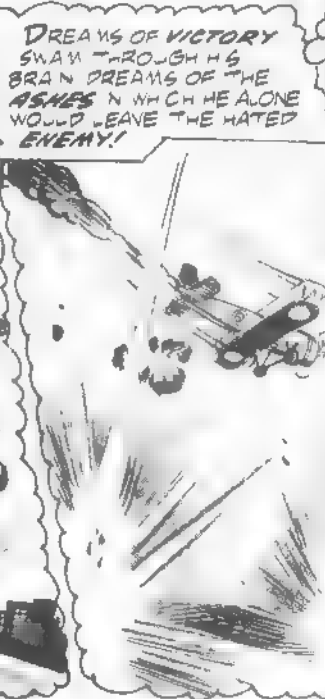
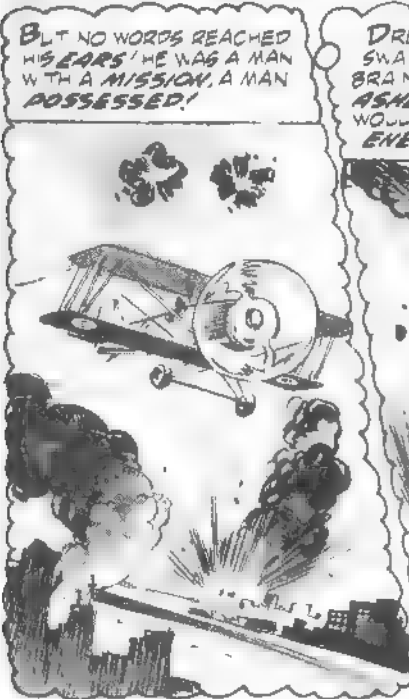
PARDON OUR INTRUSION, BUT I'M MR. SHAYNE--AND THIS IS MY WIFE!

WE'RE TOM'S PARENTS! WE WERE VISITING IN FRANCE WHEN WE HEARD OF OUR SON'S DEATH!

HE SAID YOU WERE HIS FRIEND--SO WE WANTED TO SEE YOU!

BUT OF COURSE! WON'T YOU PLEASE COME IN!





BUT, WITH THE GREAT
WAR OVER, WHAT WOULD
BE THE FATE OF ONE
WHO WALKED LIKE A
GOD-- IN A WORLD
FILLED WITH MEN?

ONLY TIME
WOULD
TELL....!

SPECIAL NOTE:
THIS CONCLUDES OUR
ADAPTATION OF THE
FIRST HALF OF
PHILIP WYLIE'S EPIC
NOVEL, **GLADIATOR**.
IF YOU'D LIKE TO
LEARN THE REST OF
HUGO DANNER'S
AMAZING STORY, LET
US KNOW--SOON!

-FIN-



Philip Wylie

By Don & Maggie Thompson

Philip Gordon Wylie was born in Beverly, Massachusetts, on May 12, 1902, and died in Coral Gables, Florida, of a heart ailment on October 25, 1971. Between the two dates, he made himself famous more for his criticisms of society than for the quantities of general fiction which he wrote.

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His best-known book is his 1942, *Generation of Vipers*, which caused great excitement and controversy with his view of the American "Mom," whom he described as "a middle-aged puttin with an eye like a hawk that has just seen a rabbit twitch below." Wylie liked to shock his readers with vitriolic comments and wrote attacks

on public schools ("instruments of stupidity and lies"), organized religion ("colossus of bigotry"); marriage ("the only reason for marriage is breeding"); urban developers, communists, fascists, present-day youth, and so on. In person, he often came

(Continued on page 58)

(Continued from page 56)

across as soft spoken, shy, and amiable.

He was a very prolific writer who dictated all his stories. According to the 1942 edition of *Twentieth Century Authors*, he once dictated a 100,000-word novel in nine days, while crossing the Atlantic.

While considered a writer of general mainstream fiction, Wylie was a long-time fan of science fiction, a charter subscriber to *Amazing Stories* (the world's first science fiction magazine, born in 1926 and still being published fifty years later). He wrote a great deal of science fiction himself.

His career often combined science fiction with social indictments. His last novel, published after his death, was a science fiction novel set in 2023, *The End of the Dream*, which detailed the crumbling of our society from a variety of ecological and social flaws.

Among his many science fiction novels—in addition to *Gladiator*, of course—were *When Worlds Collide* and its sequel, *After Worlds Collide*, both of which were written in collaboration with Edwin Balmer, the editor of *Redbook* magazine. *When Worlds Collide* told of Earth's impending collision with a runaway planet and the attempt of a handful of people to flee by rocketship to another planet. *After Worlds Collide* tells of the struggle of

that handful to make a new life on their new world. A third novel was planned but Wylie decided not to write it because the collaborators were not able to come up with a plot he considered strong enough to justify yet another sequel.

When Worlds Collide was adapted into a short lived comic strip (*Speed Spaulding*) and into a quite good George Pal movie with very impressive special effects. It is to be remade as a very expensive co-production of Paramount and Universal Studios in the very near future. For a 1933 novel, it is holding up remarkably well.

Wylie also wrote a novel called *The Disappearance*, in which for women all men disappeared and for men all women disappeared. This is such a colossal idea that it is possible to forgive Wylie for not being able to come up with an explanation other than to imply a miracle caused by divine intervention. Oddly, for the man who tried so hard to make "Mom" a dirty word, the women did much better than the men at coping with the catastrophic changes in life.

Other Wylie science fiction includes *Tomorrow*, a rather thinly plotted look at a bleak future, and some portions of an otherwise mainstream novel, *Finnley Wren*, in which the hero occasionally writes science fiction stories.

Wylie also wrote the screenplay for

the Charles Laughton Bela Lugosi movie *Island of Lost Souls*, based on H.G. Wells' novel *The Island of Doctor Moreau*.

In addition to science fiction and serious novels, Wylie wrote many magazine articles, quite a large number of mystery stories, and a vast quantity of stories about two deep sea fishermen named Crutch and Des. There was even a *Crutch and Des* television series several years ago.

A sad sidelight on Wylie's life came in 1963, when his niece, Janice Wylie, a 21 year old researcher for *Newsweek* magazine, and her room mate, Emily Hottel, a 23 year old teacher, were stabbed to death in their East Side New York apartment.

Police arrested a man and got a confession, apparently by coercion, only to have the real killer later confess.

The murders, false arrest, and confession served as the basis for a fictionalized television movie, *The Marcus Nelson Murders*, which starred Telly Savalas in a role that later became a television series, that of Lt. Theo Kojak. Wylie had nothing to do with the writing of the movie or series, however.

Of Wylie's thirty four books, only the science fiction novels and *Generation of Vipers* are likely to be remembered. But they are keys to be remembered for a very long time.



SUPERMEN IN SCIENCE FICTION



By Don & Maggie Thompson

There are many plot elements which have become traditional in science fiction: time travel, alien life forms, and so on. One of these elements is that of the "superman," and it is so important that science-fiction fan Jack Speer many years ago listed four different classes of "superman."

Speer's four classes (according to Richard Eney's definitive but long-out-of-print *FANCYCLOPEDIA II*) were the following. "(1) Super-developed Homo sapiens, either thru special training like Doc Savage or thru the advantages of a more advanced civilization than ours, like

Eldred Crang in the A [pronounced 'Null-A'] series [by A.E. van Vogt]. (2) Homo sapiens with certain powers added, as by constructive (rather than merely preventive) medicine—e.g., Stephen Germaine in [S.J.] Byrne's *COLOSSUS*; by genetic selection of existing human qualities, as the people in [Robert A. Heinlein's] *BEYOND THIS HORIZON*, or by immortality however acquired . . . (3) Homo superior, humanoids with extra-human powers, like the Slans [from van Vogt's *SLAN*] or many another mutant (4) Non human superior races, such as super-

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intelligent insects, [extraterrestrials], highly efficient robots and intelligences of pure force. Type 3 is what is usually meant when fans discuss the Superman: a new species of genus HOMO.

Many of these types have been with us via fantasy and/or mythology since prehistoric times. Samson in the Old Testament, Jason of Greek myth, and Chu Chulainn of Celtic lore are all examples of men who became pre-eminent by training and instruction. (The Celtic hero's abilities were abetted by sorcery, too, which may account for some of his physical oddities, such as the seven pupils he had in each eye and his ability to turn front to back in his skin when in a battle frenzy—a fantastic ability but of questionable value in a fight.) The Wandering Jew, Cassandra, and Achilles were all examples of normal humans who were endowed with super abilities. Countless demi-gods can be listed who, though part human, had seeds of abilities visited on them by virtue of being sons or daughters of union between gods and mortals: the Greek Herakles (better known by his Roman name, Hercules) and the Babylonian Gilgamesh are only two of many people whose extra abilities were attributed to being born of such liaisons. And, of course, the assorted gods (and demons) themselves are examples of non-humans superior to the men who told their stories.

A few cultures, at least, also had the concept of times when men had been or would be superior to the men discussing them. In Norse mythology, for example, following Gotterdammerung, a new world would be born from the wreckage of the old, with new gods replacing the old and Lit and Lifthrasir, a beautiful, loving, pure and innocent pair of humans, replacing the corrupt people who had inhabited the world.

Hesiod, who wrote in the ninth or eighth century B.C., was the most famous of Greece's early poets, aside from Homer. He divided the world's history into five periods: The Golden Age (of perfection and eternal Spring), The Silver Age (when men had to work and other troubles erupted), The Brazen Age (of broken laws and violence), The Heroic Age (when men began to hope for better things), and Hesiod's time, which he called The Iron Age (which he described as a time which lacked piety and justice). Obviously, his supermen inhabited a time long prior to his own; his was not a vision of an evolution of constantly improving men who might someday breed a race of supermen.

These assorted backgrounds were pooled to form the Western world's literary background, which produced more recent ideas about supermen. The idea of the Hero of all these mythologies certainly appeared frequently in popular fiction (by the late 19th century, it had taken over the dime novel to the extent that it wasn't unusual to read that this or that hero could pot a wolf with a handgun from incredible distances—anyone who actually has used a handgun knows that is a superhuman ability).

A sort of super-hero was suggested in the days in which the idea of the novel was being developed. In 1726, Jonathan Swift presented in one of Gulliver's lesser adventures the concept of the land of Luggnagg, which occasionally produced a Struldbrug or Immortal, who could not be killed by any method. Swift pointed out the tragedy of this super-power, since (as in mythology of an earlier day) immortality is not equivalent with perpetual youth. It does no good to live forever if you grow old, senile, and increasingly feeble. The "gift" of invulnerability, then, was presented as a curse.

Early superior beings in literature included those in Voltaire's *MICROMEGAS* (1752), in which his extraterrestrials had 1,000 senses. An advanced race lived on Mars in Percy Greg's *ACROSS THE ZODIAC* in 1880. Robert Louis Stevenson's *THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE* (1886) was probably one of the first stories to introduce the idea of attempting to improve man (as in Speer's second type of superman) by eliminating the baser elements of his nature medically. In such, of course, Jekyll's experiments didn't produce the effect he desired.

In 1904 H.G. Wells' *THE FOOD OF THE GODS* presented the idea of a community of gigantic super-beings, created with the use of a special diet beginning in infancy, and the problems they faced, especially the hostility of ordinary people. The culmination was in the concept of a rivalry between the two groups, and the decision of the giants to continue as a species.

Stories of super-powered beings face some problems inherent in the very concept of superpowered beings. There is a temptation on the part of the author to create the "perfect" human: invulnerable, superintelligent, super-strong, and possessed of such additional benefits to life as super speed, telepathy, and telekinesis. Such a superman becomes nothing more than a bore—simply because there is nothing opposing him that he cannot readily handle.

The science-fiction writer Fletcher Pratt wrote "A Critique of Science Fiction" for *MODERN SCIENCE FICTION*, a book edited by Reginald Bretter. Discussing the story of a superman, he commented: "It represents the mythology of science-fiction: the age-old desire for gods to walk the earth and control the whirlwinds, and a certain amount of reader identification with those gods, the noblest and most powerful of human beings. But in science-fiction the representation is usually on a very low level, a childish level." He continued: "If a superman really does go super on you, you can't beat him down at all. He has no bounds or limitations."

Pratt pointed out some solutions to the problem for the writer. "In fact, one of the main problems of the science-fiction writer, once he has imagined a character with some unusual ability such as telepathy or immunity to poison, may be stated as that of keeping things under control, of examining with minutest care the disadvantages that go with the unusual accomplishment. Otherwise the whole thing sinks to the Superman class. The problem exists even more seriously in pure fantasy—why don't the witches take over the world if they're so hot?"

The Bretter book appeared in 1953, but Philip Wylie had discovered in his 1930 novel *GLADIATOR* the principle Pratt wrote about two decades later. His character is physically unmatched in the world—the strongest and the fastest and the most untouched by weapons. But Hugo Danner is *not* the most intelligent or the most sensible man in the world—and, in fact, his special talents produce the tragic flaw of feeling so separate from humanity that he can't manage a happy life for himself or those around him.

In fact, Wylie's view of the super-being is that of a tormented creature, always made miserable by his talents—thanks in good part to the pettiness of mankind. He explored the life of such a super-man from birth to death and did it with such thoroughness that it was not really explored again.

H.G. Wells had dealt with super-creatures (though they were giants) in *THE FOOD OF THE GODS* in 1904. And

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 American Cancer Society

(Continued from page 63)

Wylie was well acquainted with Wells' writings. The year after *GLADIATOR* appeared, Wylie's *THE MURDER INVISIBLE* was published—and it carried traces of familiarity with Wells' 1897 *THE INVISIBLE MAN*. SF historian Sam Moskowitz said Universal's *THE INVISIBLE MAN* (1933) "owed as much to Wylie as to Wells in the final form" and that Universal bought movie rights to both books before making the film. Wylie co-wrote with Waldemar Young the screenplay of *ISLAND OF LOST SOULS* (released in 1933), which was based on Wells' *THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU*. It is quite probable that Wylie kept in mind Wells' tale of the torments of the supermen among normal men when he approached *GLADIATOR*.

GLADIATOR was not acknowledged in its day as being the culmination of writing about a physical super being—

but it was singled out in "In the Realm of Books," the SF book review column in *AMAZING STORIES*, June 1930. The review was captioned "Shades of the *Nth Man*," apparently a reference to the now-forgotten novelette "The Nth Man" by Homer Eon Flint, which had appeared in *AMAZING QUARTERLY* for Spring 1928. The reviewer, C. A. Brandt, opened his review, "'THE GLADIATOR' is a book which starts well, is quite readable and entertaining throughout, but is, after all, disappointing." (Brandt's review consistently referred to Hugo's father—Abednego Danner—as "Abednezo Dumu," which probably was caused by misreading Brandt's handwritten manuscript.)

Whatever the merits or flaws of "The Nth Man," it is *GLADIATOR* which is remembered today.

One reason for its remembrance is the similarity between it and the creation of two youths from Cleveland, Ohio—Jerome Siegel and Joe Shuster—whose own hero was known as Clark Kent. Moskowitz, in his book about SF



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writers, **EXPLORERS OF THE INFINITE**, said they "would borrow the central theme from **GLADIATOR**, even paraphrase some of the dialogue, to create one of the most popular cartoon adventure strips of our time." A side-by-side comparison of **GLADIATOR** and early Superman stories show no trace of paraphrased dialogue, despite Moskowitz's claim.

GLADIATOR was a dead end in SF, Wylie having said most of what could be done with a straight extrapolation of such a character. Most supermen in SF were ones with superior mental abilities, with the superior human discovering his powers as a continuing element in much of the work of A.E. van Vogt—especially in his classic **SLAN**. Olaf Stapledon's **ODD JOHN** was another superior being who came to a sad end. But Pratt commented, "ODD JOHN was less a superman than a badly integrated post-adolescent, who belonged on a psychiatrist's couch." And L. Sprague de Camp used the Stapledon novel as an example of failure to follow the rule that "to make a story convincing, you must have absolute internal consistency." (When Stapledon's mutants established their colony on an island, they murdered to maintain secrecy. But when the government sent ships to investigate, "though the mutants have been portrayed as infinitely superior to *Homo Sapiens* in foresight, ingenuity, and all other mental qualities, they now display little evidence of these powers, awaiting their doom with zombian fatalism." (From the 1953 edition of **SCIENCE-FICTION HANDBOOK**.)

Nevertheless, the mental giant has been a matter of

routine in SF, virtually taking over stories in the magazine **ANALOG** for some years. And there have been multitudes of stories of superior races which visit earth, not only in the present and the future, but also in the past, often to become regarded as gods. These were presented as fiction long before Erich von Däniken wrote of them as fact in **CHARIOTS OF THE GODS** and other books.

But the dead-end of **GLADIATOR** was transformed into a continuing character by the comic-book industry. By changing a concept of a human-with-added-powers into that of a humanoid extraterrestrial with powers normal for his race but unique to earth, Siegel and Shuster came up with a fresh super-being with an exuberance in the performance of his feats. Readers might note such similarities between Kent and Danner as that, in his first appearance, each had powers compared with the leaping and carrying abilities of ants and grasshoppers. And Wylie described the soldier Hugo as "like a being of steel." Neither Kent nor Danner could end a world war single-handed. Danner and Kent (in his early days) could be destroyed by a bursting shell. Each could take giant leaps.

But Superman *enjoyed* his life. Hugo Danner did not.

Wylie's hero did not spawn a vast number of imitations in book and magazine SF, largely because Wylie had thoroughly exhausted the possibilities of a physical-superman.

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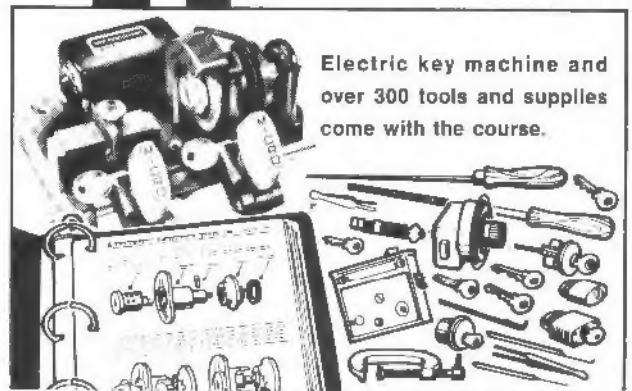


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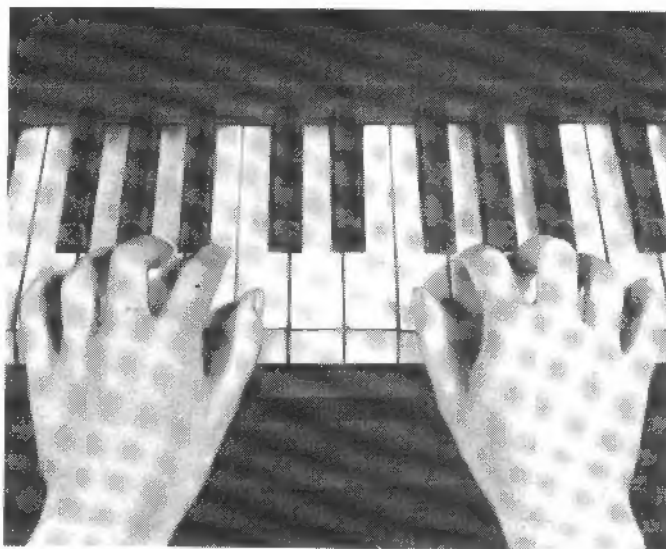
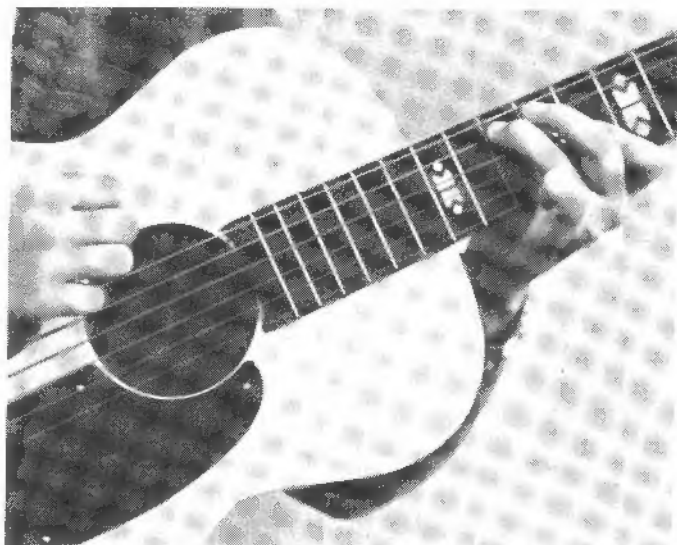


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